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THE WORKS OF HENRY FIELDING

VOLUME SIX

THE HISTORY

OF

TOM JONES

A FOUNDLING

COMPLETE IN FOUR PARTS

PART IV.

WITH THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE, AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. H. MAYNADIER, PH.D.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

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THE

HISTORY *of* TOM JONES

A FOUNDLING

BOOK XIV. — *continued*

CHAPTER FOUR

WHICH WE HOPE WILL BE VERY ATTENTIVELY PERUSED BY YOUNG PEOPLE OF BOTH SEXES.

PARTRIDGE had no sooner left Mr. Jones than Mr. Nightingale, with whom he had now contracted a great intimacy, came to him, and, after a short salutation, said, "So, Tom, I hear you had company very late last night. Upon my soul you are a happy fellow, who have not been in town above a fortnight, and can keep chairs waiting at your door till two in the morning." He then ran on with much common-place raillery of the same kind, till Jones at last interrupted him, saying, "I suppose you have received all this information from Mrs. Miller, who hath been up here a little while ago to give me warning. The good woman is afraid, it seems, of the reputation of her daughters." "Oh! she is wonderfully nice," says Nightingale, "upon that account; if you remember, she would not let Nancy

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go with us to the masquerade." "Nay, upon my honour, I think she's in the right of it," says Jones: "however, I have taken her at her word, and have sent Partridge to look for another lodging." "If you will," says Nightingale, "we may, I believe, be again together; for, to tell you a secret, which I desire you won't mention in the family, I intend to quit the house to-day." "What, hath Mrs. Miller given you warning too, my friend?" cries Jones. "No," answered the other; "but the rooms are not convenient enough. Besides, I am grown weary of this part of the town. I want to be nearer the places of diversion; so I am going to Pall-mall." "And do you intend to make a secret of your going away?" said Jones. "I promise you," answered Nightingale, "I don't intend to bilk my lodgings; but I have a private reason for not taking a formal leave." "Not so private," answered Jones; "I promise you, I have seen it ever since the second day of my coming to the house. Here will be some wet eyes on your departure. Poor Nancy, I pity her, faith! Indeed, Jack, you have played the fool with that girl. You have given her a longing, which I am afraid nothing will ever cure her of." Nightingale answered, "What the devil would you have me do? would you have me marry her to cure her?" "No," answered Jones, "I would not have had you make love to her, as you have often done in my presence. I have been astonished at the blindness of her mother in never seeing it." "Pugh, see it!" cries Nightingale. "What the devil should she see?" "Why, see," said Jones, "that you have made her

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daughter distractedly in love with you. The poor girl cannot conceal it a moment; her eyes are never off from you, and she always colours every time you come into the room. Indeed, I pity her heartily; for she seems to be one of the best-natured and honestest of human creatures." "And so," answered Nightingale, "according to your doctrine, one must not amuse oneself by any common gallantries with women, for fear they should fall in love with us." "Indeed, Jack," said Jones, "you wilfully misunderstand me; I do not fancy women are so apt to fall in love; but you have gone far beyond common gallantries." "What, do you suppose," says Nightingale, "that we have been a-bed together?" "No, upon my honour," answered Jones very seriously, "I do not suppose so ill of you; nay, I will go farther, I do not imagine you have laid a regular premeditated scheme for the destruction of the quiet of a poor little creature, or have even foreseen the consequence: for I am sure thou art a very good-natured fellow; and such a one can never be guilty of a cruelty of that kind; but at the same time you have pleased your own vanity, without considering that this poor girl was made a sacrifice to it; and while you have had no design but of amusing an idle hour, you have actually given her reason to flatter herself that you had the most serious designs in her favour. Prithee, Jack, answer me honestly; to what have tended all those elegant and luscious descriptions of happiness arising from violent and mutual fondness? all those warm professions of tenderness, and generous disinterested love? Did you imagine she would not ap-

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ply them? or, speak ingenuously, did not you intend she should?" "Upon my soul, Tom," cries Nightingale, "I did not think this was in thee. Thou wilt make an admirable parson. So I suppose you would not go to bed to Nancy now, if she would let you?" "No," cries Jones, "may I be d—n'd if I would." "Tom, Tom," answered Nightingale, "last night; remember last night ——

> When every eye was closed, and the pale moon,
> And silent stars, shone conscious of the theft."

"Lookee, Mr. Nightingale," said Jones, "I am no canting hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the gift of chastity, more than my neighbours. I have been guilty with women, I own it; but am not conscious that I have ever injured any. — Nor would I, to procure pleasure to myself, be knowingly the cause of misery to any human being."

"Well, well," said Nightingale, "I believe you, and I am convinced you acquit me of any such thing."

"I do, from my heart," answered Jones, "of having debauched the girl, but not from having gained her affections."

"If I have," said Nightingale, "I am sorry for it; but time and absence will soon wear off such impressions. It is a receipt I must take myself; for, to confess the truth to you — I never liked any girl half so much in my whole life; but I must let you into the whole secret, Tom. My father hath provided a match for me with a woman I never saw; and she is now coming to town, in order for me to make my addresses to her."

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At these words Jones burst into a loud fit of laughter; when Nightingale cried — "Nay, prithee, don't turn me into ridicule. The devil take me if I am not half mad about this matter! my poor Nancy! Oh! Jones, Jones, I wish I had a fortune in my own possession."

"I heartily wish you had," cries Jones; "for, if this be the case, I sincerely pity you both; but surely you don't intend to go away without taking your leave of her?"

"I would not," answered Nightingale, "undergo the pain of taking leave, for ten thousand pounds; besides, I am convinced, instead of answering any good purpose, it would only serve to inflame my poor Nancy the more. I beg, therefore, you would not mention a word of it to-day, and in the evening, or to-morrow morning, I intend to depart."

Jones promised he would not; and said, upon reflection, he thought, as he had determined and was obliged to leave her, he took the most prudent method. He then told Nightingale he should be very glad to lodge in the same house with him; and it was accordingly agreed between them, that Nightingale should procure him either the ground floor, or the two pair of stairs; for the young gentleman himself was to occupy that which was between them.

This Nightingale, of whom we shall be presently obliged to say a little more, was in the ordinary transactions of life a man of strict honour, and, what is more rare among young gentlemen of the town, one of strict honesty too; yet in affairs of love he was somewhat loose in his morals; not that he was even

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here as void of principle as gentlemen sometimes are, and oftener affect to be; but it is certain he had been guilty of some indefensible treachery to women, and had, in a certain mystery, called making love, practised many deceits, which, if he had used in trade, he would have been counted the greatest villain upon earth.

But as the world, I know not well for what reason, agree to see this treachery in a better light, he was so far from being ashamed of his iniquities of this kind, that he gloried in them, and would often boast of his skill in gaining of women, and his triumphs over their hearts, for which he had before this time received some rebukes from Jones, who always exprest great bitterness against any misbehaviour to the fair part of the species, who, if considered, he said, as they ought to be, in the light of the dearest friends, were to be cultivated, honoured, and caressed with the utmost love and tenderness; but, if regarded as enemies, were a conquest of which a man ought rather to be ashamed than to value himself upon it.

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CHAPTER FIVE

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY OF MRS. MILLER.

JONES this day eat a pretty good dinner for a sick man, that is to say, the larger half of a shoulder of mutton. In the afternoon he received an invitation from Mrs. Miller to drink tea; for that good woman, having learnt, either by means of Partridge, or by some other means natural or supernatural, that he had a connexion with Mr. Allworthy, could not endure the thoughts of parting with him in an angry manner.

Jones accepted the invitation; and no sooner was the tea-kettle removed, and the girls sent out of the room, than the widow, without much preface, began as follows: "Well, there are very surprizing things happen in this world; but certainly it is a wonderful business that I should have a relation of Mr. Allworthy in my house, and never know anything of the matter. Alas! sir, you little imagine what a friend that best of gentlemen hath been to me and mine. Yes, sir, I am not ashamed to own it; it is owing to his goodness that I did not long since perish for want, and leave my poor little wretches, two destitute, helpless, friendless orphans, to the care, or rather to the cruelty, of the world.

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"You must know, sir, though I am now reduced to get my living by letting lodgings, I was born and bred a gentlewoman. My father was an officer of the army, and died in a considerable rank: but he lived up to his pay; and, as that expired with him, his family, at his death, became beggars. We were three sisters. One of us had the good luck to die soon after of the small-pox; a lady was so kind as to take the second out of charity, as she said, to wait upon her. The mother of this lady had been a servant to my grandmother; and, having inherited a vast fortune from her father, which he had got by pawnbroking, was married to a gentleman of great estate and fashion. She used my sister so barbarously, often upbraiding her with her birth and poverty, calling her in derision a gentlewoman, that I believe she at length broke the heart of the poor girl. In short, she likewise died within a twelvemonth after my father. Fortune thought proper to provide better for me, and within a month from his decease I was married to a clergyman, who had been my lover a long time before, and who had been very ill used by my father on that account: for though my poor father could not give any of us a shilling, yet he bred us up as delicately, considered us, and would have had us consider ourselves, as highly as if we had been the richest heiresses. But my dear husband forgot all this usage, and the moment we were become fatherless he immediately renewed his addresses to me so warmly, that I, who always liked, and now more than ever esteemed him, soon complied. Five years did I live in a state of perfect happiness with that best of

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men, till at last — Oh! cruel! cruel fortune, that ever separated us, that deprived me of the kindest of husbands and my poor girls of the tenderest parent. — O my poor girls! you never knew the blessing which ye lost. — I am ashamed, Mr. Jones, of this womanish weakness; but I shall never mention him without tears." "I ought rather, madam," said Jones, "to be ashamed that I do not accompany you." "Well, sir," continued she, "I was now left a second time in a much worse condition than before; besides the terrible affliction I was to encounter, I had now two children to provide for; and was, if possible, more pennyless than ever; when that great, that good, that glorious man, Mr. Allworthy, who had some little acquaintance with my husband, accidentally heard of my distress, and immediately writ this letter to me. Here, sir, here it is; I put it into my pocket to shew it you. This is the letter, sir; I must and will read it to you.

"'MADAM, — I heartily condole with you on your late grievous loss, which your own good sense, and the excellent lessons you must have learnt from the worthiest of men, will better enable you to bear than any advice which I am capable of giving. Nor have I any doubt that you, whom I have heard to be the tenderest of mothers, will suffer any immoderate indulgence of grief to prevent you from discharging your duty to those poor infants, who now alone stand in need of your tenderness.

"'However, as you must be supposed at present to be incapable of much worldly consideration, you will pardon my having ordered a person to wait on you,

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and to pay you twenty guineas, which I beg you will accept till I have the pleasure of seeing you, and believe me to be, madam, &c.'

"This letter, sir, I received within a fortnight after the irreparable loss I have mentioned; and within a fortnight afterwards, Mr. Allworthy — the blessed Mr. Allworthy, came to pay me a visit, when he placed me in the house where you now see me, gave me a large sum of money to furnish it, and settled an annuity of £50 a-year upon me, which I have constantly received ever since. Judge, then, Mr. Jones, in what regard I must hold a benefactor, to whom I owe the preservation of my life, and of those dear children, for whose sake alone my life is valuable. Do not, therefore, think me impertinent, Mr. Jones (since I must esteem one for whom I know Mr. Allworthy hath so much value), if I beg you not to converse with these wicked women. You are a young gentleman, and do not know half their artful wiles. Do not be angry with me, sir, for what I said upon account of my house; you must be sensible it would be the ruin of my poor dear girls. Besides, sir, you cannot but be acquainted that Mr. Allworthy himself would never forgive my conniving at such matters, and particularly with you."

"Upon my word, madam," said Jones, "you need make no farther apology; nor do I in the least take anything ill you have said; but give me leave, as no one can have more value than myself for Mr. Allworthy, to deliver you from one mistake, which, perhaps, would not be altogether for his honour; I do assure you, I am no relation of his."

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"Alas! sir," answered she, "I know you are not, I know very well who you are; for Mr. Allworthy hath told me all; but I do assure you, had you been twenty times his son, he could not have expressed more regard for you than he hath often expressed in my presence. You need not be ashamed, sir, of what you are; I promise you no good person will esteem you the less on that account. No, Mr. Jones, the words 'dishonourable birth' are nonsense, as my dear, dear husband used to say, unless the word 'dishonourable' be applied to the parents; for the children can derive no real dishonour from an act of which they are intirely innocent."

Here Jones heaved a deep sigh, and then said, "Since I perceive, madam, you really do know me, and Mr. Allworthy hath thought proper to mention my name to you; and since you have been so explicit with me as to your own affairs, I will acquaint you with some more circumstances concerning myself." And these Mrs. Miller having expressed great desire and curiosity to hear, he began and related to her his whole history, without once mentioning the name of Sophia.

There is a kind of sympathy in honest minds, by means of which they give an easy credit to each other. Mrs. Miller believed all which Jones told her to be true, and exprest much pity and concern for him. She was beginning to comment on the story, but Jones interrupted her; for, as the hour of assignation now drew nigh, he began to stipulate for a second interview with the lady that evening, which he promised should be the last at her house;

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swearing, at the same time, that she was one of great distinction, and that nothing but what was intirely innocent was to pass between them; and I do firmly believe he intended to keep his word.

Mrs. Miller was at length prevailed on, and Jones departed to his chamber, where he sat alone till twelve o'clock, but no Lady Bellaston appeared.

As we have said that this lady had a great affection for Jones, and as it must have appeared that she really had so, the reader may perhaps wonder at the first failure of her appointment, as she apprehended him to be confined by sickness, a season when friendship seems most to require such visits. This behaviour, therefore, in the lady, may, by some, be condemned as unnatural; but that is not our fault; for our business is only to record truth.

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CHAPTER SIX

CONTAINING A SCENE WHICH WE DOUBT NOT WILL AFFECT ALL OUR READERS.

MR. JONES closed not his eyes during all the former part of the night; not owing to any uneasiness which he conceived at being disappointed by Lady Bellaston; nor was Sophia herself, though most of his waking hours were justly to be charged to her account, the present cause of dispelling his slumbers. In fact, poor Jones was one of the best-natured fellows alive, and had all that weakness which is called compassion, and which distinguishes this imperfect character from that noble firmness of mind, which rolls a man, as it were, within himself, and like a polished bowl, enables him to run through the world without being once stopped by the calamities which happen to others. He could not help, therefore, compassionating the situation of poor Nancy, whose love for Mr. Nightingale seemed to him so apparent, that he was astonished at the blindness of her mother, who had more than once, the preceding evening, remarked to him the great change in the temper of her daughter, "who from being," she said, "one of the liveliest, merriest girls in the world, was, on a sudden, become all gloom and melancholy."

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Sleep, however, at length got the better of all resistance; and now, as if he had already been a deity, as the antients imagined, and an offended one too, he seemed to enjoy his dear-bought conquest. — To speak simply, and without any metaphor, Mr. Jones slept till eleven the next morning, and would, perhaps, have continued in the same quiet situation much longer, had not a violent uproar awakened him.

Partridge was now summoned, who, being asked what was the matter, answered, "That there was a dreadful hurricane below-stairs; that Miss Nancy was in fits; and that the other sister, and the mother, were both crying and lamenting over her." Jones expressed much concern at this news; which Partridge endeavoured to relieve, by saying, with a smile, "he fancied the young lady was in no danger of death; for that Susan" (which was the name of the maid) "had given him to understand, it was nothing more than a common affair. In short," said he, "Miss Nancy hath had a mind to be as wise as her mother; that's all; she was a little hungry, it seems, and so sat down to dinner before grace was said; and so there is a child coming for the Foundling Hospital." —— "Prithee, leave thy stupid jesting," cries Jones. "Is the misery of these poor wretches a subject of mirth? Go immediately to Mrs. Miller, and tell her I beg leave — Stay, you will make some blunder; I will go myself; for she desired me to breakfast with her." He then rose and dressed himself as fast as he could; and while he was dressing, Partridge, notwithstanding many severe rebukes, could not avoid

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throwing forth certain pieces of brutality, commonly called jests, on this occasion. Jones was no sooner dressed than he walked downstairs, and knocking at the door, was presently admitted by the maid, into the outward parlour, which was as empty of company as it was of any apparatus for eating. Mrs. Miller was in the inner room with her daughter, whence the maid presently brought a message to Mr. Jones, "That her mistress hoped he would excuse the disappointment, but an accident had happened, which made it impossible for her to have the pleasure of his company at breakfast that day; and begged his pardon for not sending him up notice sooner." Jones desired, "She would give herself no trouble about anything so trifling as his disappointment; that he was heartily sorry for the occasion; and that if he could be of any service to her, she might command him."

He had scarce spoke these words, when Mrs. Miller, who heard them all, suddenly threw open the door, and coming out to him, in a flood of tears, said, "O Mr. Jones! you are certainly one of the best young men alive. I give you a thousand thanks for your kind offer of your service; but, alas! sir, it is out of your power to preserve my poor girl. — O my child! my child! she is undone, she is ruined for ever!" "I hope, madam," said Jones, "no villain"——"O Mr. Jones!" said she, "that villain who yesterday left my lodgings, hath betrayed my poor girl; hath destroyed her. — I know you are a man of honour. You have a good — a noble heart, Mr. Jones. The actions to which I have

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been myself a witness, could proceed from no other. I will tell you all: nay, indeed, it is impossible, after what hath happened, to keep it a secret. That Nightingale, that barbarous villain, hath undone my daughter. She is — she is — oh! Mr. Jones, my girl is with child by him; and in that condition he hath deserted her. Here! here, sir, is his cruel letter: read it, Mr. Jones, and tell me if such another monster lives."

The letter was as follows:

"DEAR NANCY, — As I found it impossible to mention to you what, I am afraid, will be no less shocking to you, than it is to me, I have taken this method to inform you, that my father insists upon my immediately paying my addresses to a young lady of fortune, whom he hath provided for my — I need not write the detested word. Your own good understanding will make you sensible, how entirely I am obliged to an obedience, by which I shall be for ever excluded from your dear arms. The fondness of your mother may encourage you to trust her with the unhappy consequence of our love, which may be easily kept a secret from the world, and for which I will take care to provide, as I will for you. I wish you may feel less on this account than I have suffered; but summon all your fortitude to your assistance, and forgive and forget the man, whom nothing but the prospect of certain ruin could have forced to write this letter. I bid you forget me, I mean only as a lover; but the best of friends you shall ever find in your faithful, though unhappy,

"J. N."

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When Jones had read this letter, they both stood silent during a minute, looking at each other; at last he began thus: "I cannot express, madam, how much I am shocked at what I have read; yet let me beg you, in one particular, to take the writer's advice. Consider the reputation of your daughter." ——"It is gone, it is lost, Mr. Jones," cryed she, "as well as her innocence. She received the letter in a room full of company, and immediately swooning away upon opening it, the contents were known to every one present. But the loss of her reputation, bad as it is, is not the worst; I shall lose my child; she hath attempted twice to destroy herself already; and though she hath been hitherto prevented, vows she will not outlive it; nor could I myself outlive any accident of that nature.—What then will become of my little Betsy, a helpless infant orphan? and the poor little wretch will, I believe, break her heart at the miseries with which she sees her sister and myself distracted, while she is ignorant of the cause. O 't is the most sensible, and best-natured little thing! The barbarous, cruel——hath destroyed us all. O my poor children! Is this the reward of all my cares? Is this the fruit of all my prospects? Have I so chearfully undergone all the labours and duties of a mother? Have I been so tender of their infancy, so careful of their education? Have I been toiling so many years, denying myself even the conveniences of life, to provide some little sustenance for them, to lose one or both in such a manner?" "Indeed, madam," said Jones, with tears in his eyes, "I pity you from my soul."

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—"O! Mr. Jones," answered she, "even you, though I know the goodness of your heart, can have no idea of what I feel. The best, the kindest, the most dutiful of children! O my poor Nancy, the darling of my soul! the delight of my eyes! the pride of my heart! too much, indeed, my pride; for to those foolish, ambitious hopes, arising from her beauty, I owe her ruin. Alas! I saw with pleasure the liking which this young man had for her. I thought it an honourable affection; and flattered my foolish vanity with the thoughts of seeing her married to one so much her superior. And a thousand times in my presence, nay, often in yours, he hath endeavoured to soothe and encourage these hopes by the most generous expressions of disinterested love, which he hath always directed to my poor girl, and which I, as well as she, believed to be real. Could I have believed that these were only snares laid to betray the innocence of my child, and for the ruin of us all?"—At these words little Betsy came running into the room, crying, "Dear mamma, for heaven's sake come to my sister; for she is in another fit, and my cousin can't hold her." Mrs. Miller immediately obeyed the summons; but first ordered Betsy to stay with Mr. Jones, and begged him to entertain her a few minutes, saying, in the most pathetic voice, "Good heaven! let me preserve one of my children at least."

Jones, in compliance with this request, did all he could to comfort the little girl, though he was, in reality, himself very highly affected with Mrs. Miller's story. He told her "Her sister would be soon very

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well again; that by taking on in that manner she would not only make her sister worse, but make her mother ill too." "Indeed, sir," says she, "I would not do anything to hurt them for the world. I would burst my heart rather than they should see me cry. — But my poor sister can't see me cry. — I am afraid she will never be able to see me cry any more. Indeed, I can't part with her; indeed, I can't. — And then poor mamma too, what will become of her? — She says she will die too, and leave me: but I am resolved I won't be left behind." "And are you not afraid to die, my little Betsy?" said Jones. "Yes," answered she, "I was always afraid to die; because I must have left my mamma, and my sister; but I am not afraid of going anywhere with those I love."

Jones was so pleased with this answer, that he eagerly kissed the child; and soon after Mrs. Miller returned, saying, "She thanked heaven Nancy was now come to herself. And now, Betsy," says she, "you may go in, for your sister is better, and longs to see you." She then turned to Jones, and began to renew her apologies for having disappointed him of his breakfast.

"I hope, madam," said Jones, "I shall have a more exquisite repast than any you could have provided for me. This, I assure you, will be the case, if I can do any service to this little family of love. But whatever success may attend my endeavours, I am resolved to attempt it. I am very much deceived in Mr. Nightingale, if, notwithstanding what hath happened, he hath not much goodness of heart at the

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bottom, as well as a very violent affection for your daughter. If this be the case, I think the picture which I shall lay before him will affect him. Endeavour, madam, to comfort yourself, and Miss Nancy, as well as you can. I will go instantly in quest of Mr. Nightingale; and I hope to bring you good news."

Mrs. Miller fell upon her knees and invoked all the blessings of heaven upon Mr. Jones; to which she afterwards added the most passionate expressions of gratitude. He then departed to find Mr. Nightingale, and the good woman returned to comfort her daughter, who was somewhat cheared at what her mother told her; and both joined in resounding the praises of Mr. Jones.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN MR. JONES AND MR. NIGHTINGALE.

THE good or evil we confer on others very often, I believe, recoils on ourselves. For as men of a benign disposition enjoy their own acts of beneficence equally with those to whom they are done, so there are scarce any natures so entirely diabolical, as to be capable of doing injuries, without paying themselves some pangs for the ruin which they bring on their fellow-creatures.

Mr. Nightingale, at least, was not such a person. On the contrary, Jones found him in his new lodgings, sitting melancholy by the fire, and silently lamenting the unhappy situation in which he had placed poor Nancy. He no sooner saw his friend appear than he arose hastily to meet him; and after much congratulation said, "Nothing could be more opportune than this kind visit; for I was never more in the spleen in my life."

"I am sorry," answered Jones, "that I bring news very unlikely to relieve you: nay, what I am convinced must, of all other, shock you the most. However, it is necessary you should know it. Without further preface, then, I come to you, Mr. Nightingale, from

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a worthy family, which you have involved in misery and ruin." Mr. Nightingale changed colour at these words; but Jones, without regarding it, proceeded, in the liveliest manner, to paint the tragical story with which the reader was acquainted in the last chapter.

Nightingale never once interrupted the narration, though he discovered violent emotions at many parts of it. But when it was concluded, after fetching a deep sigh, he said, "What you tell me, my friend, affects me in the tenderest manner. Sure there never was so cursed an accident as the poor girl's betraying my letter. Her reputation might otherwise have been safe, and the affair might have remained a profound secret; and then the girl might have gone off never the worse; for many such things happen in this town: and if the husband should suspect a little, when it is too late, it will be his wiser conduct to conceal his suspicion both from his wife and the world."

"Indeed, my friend," answered Jones, "this could not have been the case with your poor Nancy. You have so entirely gained her affections, that it is the loss of you, and not of her reputation, which afflicts her, and will end in the destruction of her and her family." "Nay, for that matter, I promise you," cries Nightingale, "she hath my affections so absolutely, that my wife, whoever she is to be, will have very little share in them." "And is it possible then," said Jones, "you can think of deserting her?" "Why, what can I do?" answered the other. "Ask Miss Nancy," replied Jones warmly. "In the condi-

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tion to which you have reduced her, I sincerely think she ought to determine what reparation you shall make her. Her interest alone, and not yours, ought to be your sole consideration. But if you ask me what you shall do, what can you do less," cries Jones, "than fulfil the expectations of her family, and her own? Nay, I sincerely tell you, they were mine too, ever since I first saw you together. You will pardon me if I presume on the friendship you have favoured me with, moved as I am with compassion for those poor creatures. But your own heart will best suggest to you, whether you have never intended, by your conduct, to persuade the mother, as well as the daughter, into an opinion, that you designed honourably: and if so, though there may have been no direct promise of marriage in the case, I will leave to your own good understanding, how far you are bound to proceed."

"Nay, I must not only confess what you have hinted," said Nightingale; "but I am afraid even that very promise you mention I have given." "And can you, after owning that," said Jones, "hesitate a moment?" "Consider, my friend," answered the other; "I know you are a man of honour, and would advise no one to act contrary to its rules; if there were no other objection, can I, after this publication of her disgrace, think of such an alliance with honour?" "Undoubtedly," replied Jones, "and the very best and truest honour, which is goodness, requires it of you. As you mention a scruple of this kind, you will give me leave to examine it. Can you with honour be guilty of having under false pre-

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tences deceived a young woman and her family, and of having by these means treacherously robbed her of her innocence? Can you, with honour, be the knowing, the wilful occasion, nay, the artful contriver of the ruin of a human being? Can you, with honour, destroy the fame, the peace, nay, probably, both the life and soul too, of this creature? Can honour bear the thought, that this creature is a tender, helpless, defenceless, young woman? A young woman, who loves, who doats on you, who dies for you; who hath placed the utmost confidence in your promises; and to that confidence hath sacrificed everything which is dear to her? Can honour support such contemplations as these a moment?"

"Common sense, indeed," said Nightingale, "warrants all you say; but yet you well know the opinion of the world is so contrary to it, that, was I to marry a whore, though my own, I should be ashamed of ever showing my face again."

"Fie upon it, Mr. Nightingale!" said Jones, "do not call her by so ungenerous a name: when you promised to marry her she became your wife; and she hath sinned more against prudence than virtue. And what is this world which you would be ashamed to face but the vile, the foolish, and the profligate? Forgive me if I say such a shame must proceed from false modesty, which always attends false honour as its shadow. — But I am well assured there is not a man of real sense and goodness in the world who would not honour and applaud the action. But, admit no other would, would not your own heart, my friend, applaud it? And do not the warm, rap-

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turous sensations, which we feel from the consciousness of an honest, noble, generous, benevolent action, convey more delight to the mind than the undeserved praise of millions? Set the alternative fairly before your eyes. On the one side, see this poor, unhappy, tender, believing girl, in the arms of her wretched mother, breathing her last. Hear her breaking heart in agonies, sighing out your name; and lamenting, rather than accusing, the cruelty which weighs her down to destruction. Paint to your imagination the circumstances of her fond despairing parent, driven to madness, or, perhaps, to death, by the loss of her lovely daughter. View the poor, helpless, orphan infant; and when your mind hath dwelt a moment only on such ideas, consider yourself as the cause of all the ruin of this poor, little, worthy, defenceless family. On the other side, consider yourself as relieving them from their temporary sufferings. Think with what joy, with what transports that lovely creature will fly to your arms. See her blood returning to her pale cheeks, her fire to her languid eyes, and raptures to her tortured breast. Consider the exultations of her mother, the happiness of all. Think of this little family made by one act of yours completely happy. Think of this alternative, and sure I am mistaken in my friend if it requires any long deliberation whether he will sink these wretches down for ever, or, by one generous, noble resolution, raise them all from the brink of misery and despair to the highest pitch of human happiness. Add to this but one consideration more; the consideration that it is your duty so to do — That the misery from which you will relieve

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these poor people is the misery which you yourself have wilfully brought upon them."

"O, my dear friend!" cries Nightingale, "I wanted not your eloquence to rouse me. I pity poor Nancy from my soul, and would willingly give anything in my power that no familiarities had ever passed between us. Nay, believe me, I had many struggles with my passion before I could prevail with myself to write that cruel letter, which hath caused all the misery in that unhappy family. If I had no inclinations to consult but my own, I would marry her to-morrow morning: I would, by heaven! but you will easily imagine how impossible it would be to prevail on my father to consent to such a match; besides, he hath provided another for me; and to-morrow, by his express command, I am to wait on the lady."

"I have not the honour to know your father," said Jones; "but, suppose he could be persuaded, would you yourself consent to the only means of preserving these poor people?" "As eagerly as I would pursue my happiness," answered Nightingale: "for I never shall find it in any other woman. — O, my dear friend! could you imagine what I have felt within these twelve hours for my poor girl, I am convinced she would not engross all your pity. Passion leads me only to her; and, if I had any foolish scruples of honour, you have fully satisfied them: could my father be induced to comply with my desires, nothing would be wanting to compleat my own happiness or that of my Nancy."

"Then I am resolved to undertake it," said Jones. "You must not be angry with me, in whatever light

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it may be necessary to set this affair, which, you may depend on it, could not otherwise be long hid from him: for things of this nature make a quick progress when once they get abroad, as this unhappily hath already. Besides, should any fatal accident follow, as upon my soul I am afraid will, unless immediately prevented, the public would ring of your name in a manner which, if your father hath common humanity, must offend him. If you will therefore tell me where I may find the old gentleman, I will not lose a moment in the business; which, while I pursue, you cannot do a more generous action than by paying a visit to the poor girl. You will find I have not exaggerated in the account I have given of the wretchedness of the family."

Nightingale immediately consented to the proposal; and now, having acquainted Jones with his father's lodging, and the coffee-house where he would most probably find him, he hesitated a moment, and then said, "My dear Tom, you are going to undertake an impossibility. If you knew my father you would never think of obtaining his consent. —— Stay, there is one way — suppose you told him I was already married, it might be easier to reconcile him to the fact after it was done; and, upon my honour, I am so affected with what you have said, and I love my Nancy so passionately, I almost wish it was done, whatever might be the consequence."

Jones greatly approved the hint, and promised to pursue it. They then separated, Nightingale to visit his Nancy, and Jones in quest of the old gentleman.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

WHAT PASSED BETWEEN JONES AND OLD MR. NIGHTINGALE; WITH THE ARRIVAL OF A PERSON NOT YET MENTIONED IN THIS HISTORY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the sentiment of the Roman satirist, which denies the divinity of fortune, and the opinion of Seneca to the same purpose; Cicero, who was, I believe, a wiser man than either of them, expressly holds the contrary; and certain it is, there are some incidents in life so very strange and unaccountable, that it seems to require more than human skill and foresight in producing them.

Of this kind was what now happened to Jones, who found Mr. Nightingale the elder in so critical a minute, that Fortune, if she was really worthy all the worship she received at Rome, could not have contrived such another. In short, the old gentleman, and the father of the young lady whom he intended for his son, had been hard at it for many hours; and the latter was just now gone, and had left the former delighted with the thoughts that he had succeeded in a long contention, which had been between the two fathers of the future bride and bridegroom; in which both endeavoured to overreach the other, and, as it not rarely happens in such

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cases, both had retreated fully satisfied of having obtained the victory.

This gentleman, whom Mr. Jones now visited, was what they call a man of the world; that is to say, a man who directs his conduct in this world as one who, being fully persuaded there is no other, is resolved to make the most of this. In his early years he had been bred to trade; but, having acquired a very good fortune, he had lately declined his business; or, to speak more properly, had changed it from dealing in goods, to dealing only in money, of which he had always a plentiful fund at command, and of which he knew very well how to make a very plentiful advantage, sometimes of the necessities of private men, and sometimes of those of the public. He had indeed conversed so entirely with money, that it may be almost doubted whether he imagined there was any other thing really existing in the world; this at least may be certainly averred, that he firmly believed nothing else to have any real value.

The reader will, I fancy, allow that Fortune could not have culled out a more improper person for Mr. Jones to attack with any probability of success; nor could the whimsical lady have directed this attack at a more unseasonable time.

As money then was always uppermost in this gentleman's thoughts, so the moment he saw a stranger within his doors it immediately occurred to his imagination, that such stranger was either come to bring him money, or to fetch it from him. And according as one or other of these thoughts prevailed, he con-

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ceived a favourable or unfavourable idea of the person who approached him.

Unluckily for Jones, the latter of these was the ascendant at present; for as a young gentleman had visited him the day before, with a bill from his son for a play debt, he apprehended, at the first sight of Jones, that he was come on such another errand. Jones therefore had no sooner told him that he was come on his son's account than the old gentleman, being confirmed in his suspicion, burst forth into an exclamation, "That he would lose his labour." "Is it then possible, sir," answered Jones, "that you can guess my business?" "If I do guess it," replied the other, "I repeat again to you, you will lose your labour. What, I suppose you are one of those sparks who lead my son into all those scenes of riot and debauchery, which will be his destruction? but I shall pay no more of his bills, I promise you. I expect he will quit all such company for the future. If I had imagined otherwise, I should not have provided a wife for him; for I would be instrumental in the ruin of nobody." "How, sir," said Jones, "and was this lady of your providing?" "Pray, sir," answered the old gentleman, "how comes it to be any concern of yours?" — "Nay, dear sir," replied Jones, "be not offended that I interest myself in what regards your son's happiness, for whom I have so great an honour and value. It was upon that very account I came to wait upon you. I can't express the satisfaction you have given me by what you say; for I do assure you your son is a person for whom I have the highest honour. — Nay, sir, it is

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not easy to express the esteem I have for you; who could be so generous, so good, so kind, so indulgent to provide such a match for your son; a woman, who, I dare swear, will make him one of the happiest men upon earth."

There is scarce anything which so happily introduces men to our good liking, as having conceived some alarm at their first appearance; when once those apprehensions begin to vanish we soon forget the fears which they occasioned, and look on ourselves as indebted for our present ease to those very persons who at first raised our fears.

Thus it happened to Nightingale, who no sooner found that Jones had no demand on him, as he suspected, than he began to be pleased with his presence. "Pray, good sir," said he, "be pleased to sit down. I do not remember to have ever had the pleasure of seeing you before; but if you are a friend of my son, and have anything to say concerning this young lady, I shall be glad to hear you. As to her making him happy, it will be his own fault if she doth not. I have discharged my duty, in taking care of the main article. She will bring him a fortune capable of making any reasonable, prudent, sober man, happy." "Undoubtedly," cries Jones, "for she is in herself a fortune; so beautiful, so genteel, so sweet-tempered, and so well-educated; she is indeed a most accomplished young lady; sings admirably well, and hath a most delicate hand at the harpsichord." "I did not know any of these matters," answered the old gentleman, "for I never saw the lady: but I do not like her the worse for what you tell me; and I am the

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better pleased with her father for not laying any stress on these qualifications in our bargain. I shall always think it a proof of his understanding. A silly fellow would have brought in these articles as an addition to her fortune; but, to give him his due, he never mentioned any such matter; though to be sure they are no disparagements to a woman." "I do assure you, sir," cries Jones, "she hath them all in the most eminent degree: for my part, I own I was afraid you might have been a little backward, a little less inclined to the match; for your son told me you had never seen the lady; therefore I came, sir, in that case, to entreat you, to conjure you, as you value the happiness of your son, not to be averse to his match with a woman who hath not only all the good qualities I have mentioned, but many more."—"If that was your business, sir," said the old gentleman, "we are both obliged to you; and you may be perfectly easy; for I give you my word I was very well satisfied with her fortune." "Sir," answered Jones, "I honour you every moment more and more. To be so easily satisfied, so very moderate on that account, is a proof of the soundness of your understanding, as well as the nobleness of your mind." —— "Not so very moderate, young gentleman, not so very moderate," answered the father. — "Still more and more noble," replied Jones; "and give me leave to add, sensible: for sure it is little less than madness to consider money as the sole foundation of happiness. Such a woman as this with her little, her nothing of a fortune" — "I find," cries the old gentleman, "you have a pretty just opinion of money, my friend, or else you are better

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acquainted with the person of the lady than with her circumstances. Why, pray, what fortune do you imagine this lady to have?" "What fortune?" cries Jones, "why, too contemptible a one to be named for your son." — "Well, well, well," said the other, "perhaps he might have done better." — "That I deny," said Jones, "for she is one of the best of women." — "Ay, ay, but in point of fortune I mean," answered the other. "And yet, as to that now, how much do you imagine your friend is to have?" — "How much?" cries Jones, "how much? Why, at the utmost, perhaps £200." "Do you mean to banter me, young gentleman?" said the father, a little angry. "No, upon my soul," answered Jones, "I am in earnest: nay, I believe I have gone to the utmost farthing. If I do the lady an injury, I ask her pardon." "Indeed you do," cries the father; "I am certain she hath fifty times that sum, and she shall produce fifty to that before I consent that she shall marry my son." "Nay," said Jones, "it is too late to talk of consent now; if she had not fifty farthings your son is married." — "My son married!" answered the old gentleman, with surprize. "Nay," said Jones, "I thought you was unacquainted with it." "My son married to Miss Harris!" answered he again. "To Miss Harris!" said Jones; "no, sir; to Miss Nancy Miller, the daughter of Mrs. Miller, at whose house he lodged; a young lady, who, though her mother is reduced to let lodgings — " — "Are you bantering, or are you in earnest?" cries the father, with a most solemn voice. "In-

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deed, sir," answered Jones, "I scorn the character of a banterer. I came to you in most serious earnest, imagining, as I find true, that your son had never dared acquaint you with a match so much inferior to him in point of fortune, though the reputation of the lady will suffer it no longer to remain a secret."

While the father stood like one struck suddenly dumb at this news, a gentleman came into the room, and saluted him by the name of brother.

But though these two were in consanguinity so nearly related, they were in their dispositions almost the opposites to each other. The brother who now arrived had likewise been bred to trade, in which he no sooner saw himself worth £6000 than he purchased a small estate with the greatest part of it, and retired into the country; where he married the daughter of an unbeneficed clergyman; a young lady, who, though she had neither beauty nor fortune, had recommended herself to his choice entirely by her good humour, of which she possessed a very large share.

With this woman he had, during twenty-five years, lived a life more resembling the model which certain poets ascribe to the golden age, than any of those patterns which are furnished by the present times. By her he had four children, but none of them arrived at maturity, except only one daughter, whom, in vulgar language, he and his wife had spoiled; that is, had educated with the utmost tenderness and fondness, which she returned to such a degree, that she had actually refused a

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very extraordinary match with a gentleman a little turned of forty, because she could not bring herself to part with her parents.

The young lady whom Mr. Nightingale had intended for his son was a near neighbour of his brother, and an acquaintance of his niece; and in reality it was upon the account of his projected match that he was now come to town; not, indeed, to forward, but to dissuade his brother from a purpose which he conceived would inevitably ruin his nephew; for he foresaw no other event from a union with Miss Harris, notwithstanding the largeness of her fortune, as neither her person nor mind seemed to him to promise any kind of matrimonial felicity: for she was very tall, very thin, very ugly, very affected, very silly, and very ill-natured.

His brother, therefore, no sooner mentioned the marriage of his nephew with Miss Miller, than he exprest the utmost satisfaction; and when the father had very bitterly reviled his son, and pronounced sentence of beggary upon him, the uncle began in the following manner:

"If you was a little cooler, brother, I would ask you whether you love your son for his sake or for your own. You would answer, I suppose, and so I suppose you think, for his sake; and doubtless it is his happiness which you intended in the marriage you proposed for him.

"Now, brother, to prescribe rules of happiness to others hath always appeared to me very absurd, and to insist on doing this, very tyrannical. It is a vulgar error, I know; but it is, nevertheless, an error.

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And if this be absurd in other things, it is mostly so in the affair of marriage, the happiness of which depends entirely on the affection which subsists between the parties.

"I have therefore always thought it unreasonable in parents to desire to chuse for their children on this occasion; since to force affection is an impossible attempt; nay, so much doth love abhor force, that I know not whether, through an unfortunate but uncurable perverseness in our natures, it may not be even impatient of persuasion.

"It is, however, true that, though a parent will not, I think, wisely prescribe, he ought to be consulted on this occasion; and, in strictness, perhaps, should at least have a negative voice. My nephew, therefore, I own, in marrying, without asking your advice, hath been guilty of a fault. But, honestly speaking, brother, have you not a little promoted this fault? Have not your frequent declarations on this subject given him a moral certainty of your refusal, where there was any deficiency in point of fortune? Nay, doth not your present anger arise solely from that deficiency? And if he hath failed in his duty here, did you not as much exceed that authority when you absolutely bargained with him for a woman, without his knowledge, whom you yourself never saw, and whom, if you had seen and known as well as I, it must have been madness in you to have ever thought of bringing her into your family?

"Still I own my nephew in a fault; but surely it is not an unpardonable fault. He hath acted indeed without your consent, in a matter in which he ought

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to have asked it, but it is in a matter in which his interest is principally concerned; you yourself must and will acknowledge that you consulted his interest only, and if he unfortunately differed from you, and hath been mistaken in his notion of happiness, will you, brother, if you love your son, carry him still wider from the point? Will you increase the ill consequences of his simple choice? Will you endeavour to make an event certain misery to him, which may accidentally prove so? In a word, brother, because he hath put it out of your power to make his circumstances as affluent as you would, will you distress them as much as you can?"

By the force of the true Catholic faith St. Anthony won upon the fishes. Orpheus and Amphion went a little farther, and by the charms of music enchanted things merely inanimate. Wonderful, both! but neither history nor fable have ever yet ventured to record an instance of any one, who, by force of argument and reason, hath triumphed over habitual avarice.

Mr. Nightingale, the father, instead of attempting to answer his brother, contented himself with only observing, that they had always differed in their sentiments concerning the education of their children. "I wish," said he, "brother, you would have confined your care to your own daughter, and never have troubled yourself with my son, who hath, I believe, as little profited by your precepts, as by your example." For young Nightingale was his uncle's godson, and had lived more with him than with his father. So that the uncle had often de-

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clared he loved his nephew almost equally with his own child.

Jones fell into raptures with this good gentleman; and when, after much persuasion, they found the father grew still more and more irritated, instead of appeased, Jones conducted the uncle to his nephew at the house of Mrs. Miller.

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CHAPTER NINE

CONTAINING STRANGE MATTERS.

AT his return to his lodgings, Jones found the situation of affairs greatly altered from what they had been in at his departure. The mother, the two daughters, and young Mr. Nightingale, were now sat down to supper together, when the uncle was, at his own desire, introduced without any ceremony into the company, to all of whom he was well known; for he had several times visited his nephew at that house.

The old gentleman immediately walked up to Miss Nancy, saluted and wished her joy, as he did afterwards the mother and the other sister; and lastly, he paid the proper compliments to his nephew, with the same good humour and courtesy, as if his nephew had married his equal or superior in fortune, with all the previous requisites first performed.

Miss Nancy and her supposed husband both turned pale, and looked rather foolish than otherwise upon the occasion; but Mrs. Miller took the first opportunity of withdrawing; and, having sent for Jones into the dining-room, she threw herself at his feet, and in a most passionate flood of tears, called him her good angel, the preserver of her poor little family, with many other respectful and endearing appellations, and made him every acknowledg-

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ment which the highest benefit can extract from the most grateful heart.

After the first gust of her passion was a little over, which she declared, if she had not vented, would have burst her, she proceeded to inform Mr. Jones that all matters were settled between Mr. Nightingale and her daughter, and that they were to be married the next morning; at which Mr. Jones having expressed much pleasure, the poor woman fell again into a fit of joy and thanksgiving, which he at length with difficulty silenced, and prevailed on her to return with him back to the company, whom they found in the same good humour in which they had left them.

This little society now past two or three very agreeable hours together, in which the uncle, who was a very great lover of his bottle, had so well plyed his nephew, that this latter, though not drunk, began to be somewhat flustered; and now Mr. Nightingale, taking the old gentleman with him upstairs into the apartment he had lately occupied, unbosomed himself as follows: —

"As you have been always the best and kindest of uncles to me, and as you have shown such unparalleled goodness in forgiving this match, which to be sure may be thought a little improvident, I should never forgive myself if I attempted to deceive you in anything." He then confessed the truth, and opened the whole affair.

"How, Jack?" said the old gentleman, "and are you really then not married to this young woman?" "No, upon my honour," answered Nightingale, "I

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have told you the simple truth." "My dear boy," cries the uncle, kissing him, "I am heartily glad to hear it. I never was better pleased in my life. If you had been married I should have assisted you as much as was in my power to have made the best of a bad matter; but there is a great difference between considering a thing which is already done and irrecoverable, and that which is yet to do. Let your reason have fair play, Jack, and you will see this match in so foolish and preposterous a light, that there will be no need of any dissuasive arguments." "How, sir?" replies young Nightingale, "is there this difference between having already done an act, and being in honour engaged to do it!" "Pugh!" said the uncle, "honour is a creature of the world's making, and the world hath the power of a creator over it, and may govern and direct it as they please. Now you well know how trivial these breaches of contract are thought; even the grossest make but the wonder and conversation of a day. Is there a man who afterwards will be more backward in giving you his sister, or daughter? or is there any sister or daughter who would be more backward to receive you? Honour is not concerned in these engagements." "Pardon me, dear sir," cries Nightingale, "I can never think so; and not only honour, but conscience and humanity, are concerned. I am well satisfied, that, was I now to disappoint the young creature, her death would be the consequence, and I should look upon myself as her murderer; nay, as her murderer by the cruellest of all methods, by breaking her heart." "Break her

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heart, indeed! no, no, Jack," cries the uncle, "the hearts of women are not so soon broke; they are tough, boy, they are tough." "But, sir," answered Nightingale, "my own affections are engaged, and I never could be happy with any other woman. How often have I heard you say, that children should be always suffered to chuse for themselves, and that you would let my cousin Harriet do so?" "Why, ay," replied the old gentleman, "so I would have them; but then I would have them chuse wisely. — Indeed, Jack, you must and shall leave the girl." —— "Indeed, uncle," cries the other, "I must and will have her." "You will, young gentleman;" said the uncle; "I did not expect such a word from you. I should not wonder if you had used such language to your father, who hath always treated you like a dog, and kept you at the distance which a tyrant preserves over his subjects; but I, who have lived with you upon an equal footing, might surely expect better usage: but I know how to account for it all: it is all owing to your preposterous education, in which I have had too little share. There is my daughter, now, whom I have brought up as my friend, never doth anything without my advice, nor ever refuses to take it when I give it her." "You have never yet given her advice in an affair of this kind," said Nightingale; "for I am greatly mistaken in my cousin, if she would be very ready to obey even your most positive commands in abandoning her inclinations." "Don't abuse my girl," answered the old gentleman with some emotion; "don't abuse my Harriet. I have brought

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her up to have no inclinations contrary to my own. By suffering her to do whatever she pleases, I have enured her to a habit of being pleased to do whatever I like." "Pardon me, sir," said Nightingale, "I have not the least design to reflect on my cousin, for whom I have the greatest esteem; and indeed I am convinced you will never put her to so severe a tryal, or lay such hard commands on her as you would do on me.— But, dear sir, let us return to the company; for they will begin to be uneasy at our long absence. I must beg one favour of my dear uncle, which is that he would not say anything to shock the poor girl or her mother." "Oh! you need not fear me," answered he, "I understand myself too well to affront women; so I will readily grant you that favour; and in return I must expect another of you." "There are but few of your commands, sir," said Nightingale, "which I shall not very chearfully obey." "Nay, sir, I ask nothing," said the uncle, "but the honour of your company home to my lodging, that I may reason the case a little more fully with you; for I would, if possible, have the satisfaction of preserving my family, notwithstanding the headstrong folly of my brother, who, in his own opinion, is the wisest man in the world."

Nightingale, who well knew his uncle to be as headstrong as his father, submitted to attend him home, and then they both returned back into the room, where the old gentleman promised to carry himself with the same decorum which he had before maintained.

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CHAPTER TEN

A SHORT CHAPTER, WHICH CONCLUDES THE BOOK.

THE long absence of the uncle and nephew had occasioned some disquiet in the minds of all whom they had left behind them; and the more, as, during the preceding dialogue, the uncle had more than once elevated his voice, so as to be heard downstairs; which, though they could not distinguish what he said, had caused some evil foreboding in Nancy and her mother, and, indeed, even in Jones himself.

When the good company, therefore, again assembled, there was a visible alteration in all their faces; and the good-humour which, at their last meeting, universally shone forth in every countenance, was now changed into a much less agreeable aspect. It was a change, indeed, common enough to the weather in this climate, from sunshine to clouds, from June to December.

This alteration was not, however, greatly remarked by any present; for as they were all now endeavouring to conceal their own thoughts, and to act a part, they became all too busily engaged in the scene to be spectators of it. Thus neither the uncle nor nephew saw any symptoms of suspicion in the mother or daughter; nor did the mother or daughter

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remark the overacted complacence of the old man, nor the counterfeit satisfaction which grinned in the features of the young one.

Something like this, I believe, frequently happens, where the whole attention of two friends being engaged in the part which each is to act, in order to impose on the other, neither sees nor suspects the arts practised against himself; and thus the thrust of both (to borrow no improper metaphor on the occasion) alike takes place.

From the same reason it is no unusual thing for both parties to be overreached in a bargain, though the one must be always the greater loser; as was he who sold a blind horse, and received a bad note in payment.

Our company in about half an hour broke up, and the uncle carried off his nephew; but not before the latter had assured Miss Nancy, in a whisper, that he would attend her early in the morning, and fulfil all his engagements.

Jones, who was the least concerned in this scene, saw the most. He did indeed suspect the very fact; for, besides observing the great alteration in the behaviour of the uncle, the distance he assumed, and his overstrained civility to Miss Nancy; the carrying off a bridegroom from his bride at that time of night was so extraordinary a proceeding that it could be accounted for only by imagining that young Nightingale had revealed the whole truth, which the apparent openness of his temper, and his being flustered with liquor, made too probable.

While he was reasoning with himself, whether he

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should acquaint these poor people with his suspicion, the maid of the house informed him that a gentlewoman desired to speak with him. —— He went immediately out, and, taking the candle from the maid, ushered his visitant upstairs, who, in the person of Mrs. Honour, acquainted him with such dreadful news concerning his Sophia, that he immediately lost all consideration for every other person; and his whole stock of compassion was entirely swallowed up in reflections on his own misery, and on that of his unfortunate angel.

What this dreadful matter was, the reader will be informed, after we have first related the many preceding steps which produced it, and those will be the subject of the following book.

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BOOK XV

IN WHICH THE HISTORY ADVANCES ABOUT TWO DAYS.

CHAPTER ONE

TOO SHORT TO NEED A PREFACE.

THERE are a set of religious, or rather moral writers, who teach that virtue is the certain road to happiness, and vice to misery, in this world. A very wholesome and comfortable doctrine, and to which we have but one objection, namely, that it is not true.

Indeed, if by virtue these writers mean the exercise of those cardinal virtues, which like good housewives stay at home, and mind only the business of their own family, I shall very readily concede the point; for so surely do all these contribute and lead to happiness, that I could almost wish, in violation of all the antient and modern sages, to call them rather by the name of wisdom, than by that of virtue; for, with regard to this life, no system, I conceive, was ever wiser than that of the antient Epicureans, who held this wisdom to constitute the chief good; nor foolisher than that of their opposites, those modern epicures, who place all felicity in the abundant gratification of every sensual appetite.

But if by virtue is meant (as I almost think it ought) a certain relative quality, which is always

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busying itself without-doors, and seems as much interested in pursuing the good of others as its own; I cannot so easily agree that this is the surest way to human happiness; because I am afraid we must then include poverty and contempt, with all the mischiefs which backbiting, envy, and ingratitude, can bring on mankind, in our idea of happiness; nay, sometimes perhaps we shall be obliged to wait upon the said happiness to a jail; since many by the above virtue have brought themselves thither.

I have not now leisure to enter upon so large a field of speculation, as here seems opening upon me; my design was to wipe off a doctrine that lay in my way; since, while Mr. Jones was acting the most virtuous part imaginable in labouring to preserve his fellow-creatures from destruction, the devil, or some other evil spirit, one perhaps cloathed in human flesh, was hard at work to make him completely miserable in the ruin of his Sophia.

This therefore would seem an exception to the above rule, if indeed it was a rule; but as we have in our voyage through life seen so many other exceptions to it, we chuse to dispute the doctrine on which it is founded, which we don't apprehend to be Christian, which we are convinced is not true, and which is indeed destructive of one of the noblest arguments that reason alone can furnish for the belief of immortality.

But as the reader's curiosity (if he hath any) must be now awake, and hungry, we shall provide to feed it as fast as we can.

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CHAPTER TWO

IN WHICH IS OPENED A VERY BLACK DESIGN AGAINST SOPHIA.

I REMEMBER a wise old gentleman who used to say, "When children are doing nothing, they are doing mischief." I will not enlarge this quaint saying to the most beautiful part of the creation in general; but so far I may be allowed, that when the effects of female jealousy do not appear openly in their proper colours of rage and fury, we may suspect that mischievous passion to be at work privately, and attempting to undermine, what it doth not attack above-ground.

This was exemplified in the conduct of Lady Bellaston, who, under all the smiles which she wore in her countenance, concealed much indignation against Sophia; and as she plainly saw that this young lady stood between her and the full indulgence of her desires, she resolved to get rid of her by some means or other; nor was it long before a very favourable opportunity of accomplishing this presented itself to her.

The reader may be pleased to remember, that when Sophia was thrown into that consternation at the playhouse, by the wit and humour of a set of

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young gentlemen who call themselves the town, we informed him, that she had put herself under the protection of a young nobleman, who had very safely conducted her to her chair.

This nobleman, who frequently visited Lady Bellaston, had more than once seen Sophia there, since her arrival in town, and had conceived a very great liking to her; which liking, as beauty never looks more amiable than in distress, Sophia had in this fright so encreased, that he might now, without any great impropriety, be said to be actually in love with her.

It may easily be believed, that he would not suffer so handsome an occasion of improving his acquaintance with the beloved object as now offered itself to elapse, when even good breeding alone might have prompted him to pay her a visit.

The next morning therefore, after this accident, he waited on Sophia, with the usual compliments, and hopes that she had received no harm from her last night's adventure.

As love, like fire, when once thoroughly kindled, is soon blown into a flame, Sophia in a very short time compleated her conquest. Time now flew away unperceived, and the noble lord had been two hours in company with the lady, before it entered into his head that he had made too long a visit. Though this circumstance alone would have alarmed Sophia, who was somewhat more a mistress of computation at present; she had indeed much more pregnant evidence from the eyes of her lover of what past within his bosom; nay, though he did not make

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any open declaration of his passion, yet many of his expressions were rather too warm, and too tender, to have been imputed to complacence, even in the age when such complacence was in fashion; the very reverse of which is well known to be the reigning mode at present.

Lady Bellaston had been apprized of his lordship's visit at his first arrival; and the length of it very well satisfied her, that things went as she wished, and as indeed she had suspected the second time she saw this young couple together. This business, she rightly I think concluded, that she should by no means forward by mixing in the company while they were together; she therefore ordered her servants, that when my lord was going, they should tell him she desired to speak with him; and employed the intermediate time in meditating how best to accomplish a scheme, which she made no doubt but his lordship would very readily embrace the execution of.

Lord Fellamar (for that was the title of this young nobleman) was no sooner introduced to her ladyship, than she attacked him in the following strain: "Bless me, my lord, are you here yet? I thought my servants had made a mistake, and let you go away; and I wanted to see you about an affair of some importance." —— "Indeed, Lady Bellaston," said he, "I don't wonder you are astonished at the length of my visit; for I have staid above two hours, and I did not think I had staid above half-a-one." —— "What am I to conclude from thence, my lord?" said she. "The company must be very agreeable which can make time slide away so

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very deceitfully." —— "Upon my honour," said he, "the most agreeable I ever saw. Pray tell me, Lady Bellaston, who is this blazing star which you have produced among us all of a sudden?" —— "What blazing star, my lord?" said she, affecting a surprize. "I mean," said he, "the lady I saw here the other day, whom I had last night in my arms at the play-house, and to whom I have been making that unreasonable visit." —— "O, my cousin Western!" said she; "why, that blazing star, my lord, is the daughter of a country booby squire, and hath been in town about a fortnight, for the first time." —— "Upon my soul," said he, "I should swear she had been bred up in a court; for besides her beauty, I never saw anything so genteel, so sensible, so polite." —— "O brave!" cries the lady, "my cousin hath you, I find." —— "Upon my honour," answered he, "I wish she had; for I am in love with her to distraction." —— "Nay, my lord," said she, "it is not wishing yourself very ill neither, for she is a very great fortune: I assure you she is an only child, and her father's estate is a good £3000 a-year." "Then I can assure you, madam," answered the lord, "I think her the best match in England." "Indeed, my lord," replied she, "if you like her, I heartily wish you had her." "If you think so kindly of me, madam," said he, "as she is a relation of yours, will you do me the honour to propose it to her father?" "And are you really then in earnest?" cries the lady, with an affected gravity. "I hope, madam," answered he, "you have a better opinion of me, than to imagine I would jest with your ladyship

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in an affair of this kind." "Indeed, then," said the lady, "I will most readily propose your lordship to her father; and I can, I believe, assure you of his joyful acceptance of the proposal; but there is a bar, which I am almost ashamed to mention; and yet it is one you will never be able to conquer. You have a rival, my lord, and a rival who, though I blush to name him, neither you, nor all the world, will ever be able to conquer." "Upon my word, Lady Bellaston," cries he, "you have struck a damp to my heart, which hath almost deprived me of being." "Fie, my lord," said she, "I should rather hope I had struck fire into you. A lover, and talk of damps in your heart! I rather imagined you would have asked your rival's name, that you might have immediately entered the lists with him." "I promise you, madam," answered he, "there are very few things I would not undertake for your charming cousin; but pray, who is this happy man?" — "Why, he is," said she, "what I am sorry to say most happy men with us are, one of the lowest fellows in the world. He is a beggar, a bastard, a foundling, a fellow in meaner circumstances than one of your lordship's footmen." "And is it possible," cried he, "that a young creature with such perfections should think of bestowing herself so unworthily?" "Alas! my lord," answered she, "consider the country — the bane of all young women is the country. There they learn a set of romantic notions of love, and I know not what folly, which this town and good company can scarce eradicate in a whole winter." "Indeed,

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madam," replied my lord, "your cousin is of too immense a value to be thrown away; such ruin as this must be prevented." "Alas!" cries she, "my lord, how can it be prevented? The family have already done all in their power; but the girl is, I think, intoxicated, and nothing less than ruin will content her. And to deal more openly with you, I expect every day to hear she is run away with him." "What you tell me, Lady Bellaston," answered his lordship, "affects me most tenderly, and only raises my compassion, instead of lessening my adoration of your cousin. Some means must be found to preserve so inestimable a jewel. Hath your ladyship endeavoured to reason with her?" Here the lady affected a laugh, and cried, "My dear lord, sure you know us better than to talk of reasoning a young woman out of her inclinations? These inestimable jewels are as deaf as the jewels they wear: time, my lord, time is the only medicine to cure their folly; but this is a medicine which I am certain she will not take; nay, I live in hourly horrors on her account. In short, nothing but violent methods will do." "What is to be done?" cries my lord; "what methods are to be taken? — Is there any method upon earth? — Oh! Lady Bellaston! there is nothing which I would not undertake for such a reward." —— "I really know not," answered the lady, after a pause; and then pausing again, she cried out — "Upon my soul, I am at my wit's end on this girl's account. — If she can be preserved, something must be done immediately; and, as I say, nothing but violent

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methods will do. —— If your lordship hath really this attachment to my cousin (and to do her justice, except in this silly inclination, of which she will soon see her folly, she is every way deserving), I think there may be one way, indeed, it is a very disagreeable one, and what I am almost afraid to think of. — It requires a great spirit, I promise you." "I am not conscious, madam," said he, "of any defect there; nor am I, I hope, suspected of any such. It must be an egregious defect indeed, which could make me backward on this occasion." "Nay, my lord," answered she, "I am so far from doubting you, I am much more inclined to doubt my own courage; for I must run a monstrous risque. In short, I must place such a confidence in your honour as a wise woman will scarce ever place in a man on any consideration." In this point likewise my lord very well satisfied her; for his reputation was extremely clear, and common fame did him no more than justice, in speaking well of him. "Well, then," said she, "my lord, — I — I vow, I can't bear the apprehension of it. — No, it must not be. —— At least every other method shall be tried. Can you get rid of your engagements, and dine here to-day? Your lordship will have an opportunity of seeing a little more of Miss Western. — I promise you we have no time to lose. Here will be nobody but Lady Betty and Miss Eagle, and Colonel Hampsted, and Tom Edwards; they will all go soon — and I shall be at home to nobody. Then your lordship may be a little more explicit. Nay, I will contrive some

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method to convince you of her attachment to this fellow." My lord made proper compliments, accepted the invitation, and then they parted to dress, it being now past three in the morning, or to reckon by the old style, in the afternoon.

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CHAPTER THREE

A FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE FOREGOING DESIGN.

THOUGH the reader may have long since concluded Lady Bellaston to be a member (and no inconsiderable one) of the great world; she was in reality a very considerable member of the little world; by which appellation was distinguished a very worthy and honourable society which not long since flourished in this kingdom.

Among other good principles upon which this society was founded, there was one very remarkable; for, as it was a rule of an honourable club of heroes. who assembled at the close of the late war, that all the members should every day fight once at least; so 't was in this, that every member should, within the twenty-four hours, tell at least one merry fib, which was to be propagated by all the brethren and sisterhood.

Many idle stories were told about this society, which from a certain quality may be, perhaps not unjustly, supposed to have come from the society themselves. As, that the devil was the president; and that he sat in person in an elbow-chair at the upper end of the table; but, upon very strict enquiry, I find there is not the least truth in any of

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those tales, and that the assembly consisted in reality of a set of very good sort of people, and the fibs which they propagated were of a harmless kind, and tended only to produce mirth and good humour.

Edwards was likewise a member of this comical society. To him therefore Lady Bellaston applied as a proper instrument for her purpose, and furnished him with a fib, which he was to vent whenever the lady gave him her cue; and this was not to be till the evening, when all the company but Lord Fellamar and himself were gone, and while they were engaged in a rubber at whist.

To this time then, which was between seven and eight in the evening, we will convey our reader; when Lady Bellaston, Lord Fellamar, Miss Western, and Tom, being engaged at whist, and in the last game of their rubbers, Tom received his cue from Lady Bellaston, which was, "I protest, Tom, you are grown intolerable lately; you used to tell us all the news of the town, and now you know no more of the world than if you lived out of it."

Mr. Edwards then began as follows: "The fault is not mine, madam: it lies in the dulness of the age, that doth nothing worth talking of. —— O la! though now I think on 't there hath a terrible accident befallen poor Colonel Wilcox. —— Poor Ned. —— You know him, my lord, everybody knows him; faith! I am very much concerned for him."

"What is it, pray?" says Lady Bellaston.

"Why, he hath killed a man this morning in a duel, that 's all."

His lordship, who was not in the secret, asked

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gravely, whom he had killed? To which Edwards answered, "A young fellow we none of us know; a Somersetshire lad just came to town, one Jones his name is; a near relation of one Mr. Allworthy, of whom your lordship I believe hath heard. I saw the lad lie dead in a coffee-house. — Upon my soul, he is one of the finest corpses I ever saw in my life!"

Sophia, who had just began to deal as Tom had mentioned that a man was killed, stopt her hand, and listened with attention (for all stories of that kind affected her), but no sooner had he arrived at the latter part of the story than she began to deal again; and having dealt three cards to one, and seven to another, and ten to a third, at last dropt the rest from her hand, and fell back in her chair.

The company behaved as usually on these occasions. The usual disturbance ensued, the usual assistance was summoned, and Sophia at last, as it is usual, returned again to life, and was soon after, at her earnest desire, led to her own apartment; where, at my lord's request, Lady Bellaston acquainted her with the truth, attempted to carry it off as a jest of her own, and comforted her with repeated assurances, that neither his lordship nor Tom, though she had taught him the story, were in the true secret of the affair.

There was no farther evidence necessary to convince Lord Fellamar how justly the case had been represented to him by Lady Bellaston; and now, at her return into the room, a scheme was laid between these two noble persons, which, though it appeared

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in no very heinous light to his lordship (as he faithfully promised, and faithfully resolved too, to make the lady all the subsequent amends in his power by marriage), yet many of our readers, we doubt not, will see with just detestation.

The next evening at seven was appointed for the fatal purpose, when Lady Bellaston undertook that Sophia should be alone, and his lordship should be introduced to her. The whole family were to be regulated for the purpose, most of the servants despatched out of the house; and for Mrs. Honour, who, to prevent suspicion, was to be left with her mistress till his lordship's arrival, Lady Bellaston herself was to engage her in an apartment as distant as possible from the scene of the intended mischief, and out of the hearing of Sophia.

Matters being thus agreed on, his lordship took his leave, and her ladyship retired to rest, highly pleased with a project, of which she had no reason to doubt the success, and which promised so effectually to remove Sophia from being any further obstruction to her amour with Jones, by a means of which she should never appear to be guilty, even if the fact appeared to the world; but this she made no doubt of preventing by huddling up a marriage, to which she thought the ravished Sophia would easily be brought to consent, and at which all the rest of her family would rejoice.

But affairs were not in so quiet a situation in the bosom of the other conspirator; his mind was tost in all the distracting anxiety so nobly described by Shakespear —

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"Between the acting of a dreadful thing,
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream;
The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection."——

Though the violence of his passion had made him eagerly embrace the first hint of this design, especially as it came from a relation of the lady, yet when that friend to reflection, a pillow, had placed the action itself in all its natural black colours before his eyes, with all the consequences which must, and those which might probably attend it, his resolution began to abate, or rather indeed to go over to the other side; and after a long conflict, which lasted a whole night, between honour and appetite, the former at length prevailed, and he determined to wait on Lady Bellaston, and to relinquish the design.

Lady Bellaston was in bed, though very late in the morning, and Sophia sitting by her bed-side, when the servant acquainted her that Lord Fellamar was below in the parlour; upon which her ladyship desired him to stay, and that she would see him presently; but the servant was no sooner departed than poor Sophia began to intreat her cousin not to encourage the visits of that odious lord (so she called him, though a little unjustly) upon her account. "I see his design," said she; "for he made downright love to me yesterday morning; but as I am resolved never to admit it, I beg your ladyship not to leave us alone together any more, and to order the servants that, if he enquires for me, I may be always denied to him."

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"La! child," says Lady Bellaston, "you country girls have nothing but sweethearts in your head; you fancy every man who is civil to you is making love. He is one of the most gallant young fellows about town, and I am convinced means no more than a little gallantry. Make love to you indeed! I wish with all my heart he would, and you must be an arrant mad woman to refuse him."

"But as I shall certainly be that mad woman," cries Sophia, "I hope his visits shall not be intruded upon me."

"O child!" said Lady Bellaston, "you need not be so fearful; if you resolve to run away with that Jones, I know no person who can hinder you."

"Upon my honour, madam," cries Sophia, "your ladyship injures me. I will never run away with any man; nor will I ever marry contrary to my father's inclinations."

"Well, Miss Western," said the lady, "if you are not in a humour to see company this morning, you may retire to your own apartment; for I am not frightened at his lordship, and must send for him up into my dressing-room."

Sophia thanked her ladyship, and withdrew; and presently afterwards Fellamar was admitted upstairs.

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CHAPTER FOUR

BY WHICH IT WILL APPEAR HOW DANGEROUS AN ADVOCATE A LADY IS WHEN SHE APPLIES HER ELOQUENCE TO AN ILL PURPOSE.

WHEN Lady Bellaston heard the young lord's scruples, she treated them with the same disdain with which one of those sages of the law, called Newgate solicitors, treats the qualms of conscience in a young witness. "My dear lord," said she, "you certainly want a cordial. I must send to Lady Edgely for one of her best drams. Fie upon it! have more resolution. Are you frightened by the word rape? Or are you apprehensive ——? Well! if the story of Helen was modern, I should think it unnatural. I mean the behaviour of Paris, not the fondness of the lady; for all women love a man of spirit. There is another story of the Sabine ladies — and that too, I thank heaven, is very antient. Your lordship, perhaps, will admire my reading; but I think Mr. Hook tells us, they made tolerable good wives afterwards. I fancy few of my married acquaintance were ravished by their husbands." "Nay, dear Lady Bellaston," cried he, "don't ridicule me in this manner." "Why, my good lord," answered she, "do you think any woman in England would not laugh at you in her

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heart, whatever prudery she might wear in her countenance?—— You force me to use a strange kind of language, and to betray my sex most abominably; but I am contented with knowing my intentions are good, and that I am endeavouring to serve my cousin; for I think you will make her a husband notwithstanding this; or, upon my soul, I would not even persuade her to fling herself away upon an empty title. She should not upbraid me hereafter with having lost a man of spirit; for that his enemies allow this poor young fellow to be."

Let those who have had the satisfaction of hearing reflections of this kind from a wife or a mistress, declare whether they are at all sweetened by coming from a female tongue. Certain it is, they sunk deeper into his lordship than anything which Demosthenes or Cicero could have said on the occasion.

Lady Bellaston, perceiving she had fired the young lord's pride, began now, like a true orator, to rouse other passions to its assistance. "My lord," says she, in a graver voice, "you will be pleased to remember, you mentioned this matter to me first; for I would not appear to you in the light of one who is endeavouring to put off my cousin upon you. Fourscore thousand pounds do not stand in need of an advocate to recommend them." "Nor doth Miss Western," said he, "require any recommendation from her fortune; for, in my opinion, no woman ever had half her charms." "Yes, yes, my lord," replied the lady, looking in the glass, "there have been women with more than half her charms, I assure you; not that I need lessen her on that account: she is a most delicious girl, that 's

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certain; and within these few hours she will be in the arms of one, who surely doth not deserve her, though I will give him his due, I believe he is truly a man of spirit."

"I hope so, madam," said my lord; "though I must own he doth not deserve her; for, unless heaven or your ladyship disappoint me, she shall within that time be in mine."

"Well spoken, my lord," answered the lady; "I promise you no disappointment shall happen from my side; and within this week I am convinced I shall call your lordship my cousin in public."

The remainder of this scene consisted entirely of raptures, excuses, and compliments, very pleasant to have heard from the parties; but rather dull when related at second hand. Here, therefore, we shall put an end to this dialogue, and hasten to the fatal hour when everything was prepared for the destruction of poor Sophia.

But this being the most tragical matter in our whole history, we shall treat it in a chapter by itself.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONTAINING SOME MATTERS WHICH MAY AFFECT AND OTHERS WHICH MAY SURPRIZE, THE READER.

THE clock had now struck seven, and poor Sophia, alone and melancholy, sat reading a tragedy. It was the Fatal Marriage; and she was now come to that part where the poor distrest Isabella disposes of her wedding-ring.

Here the book dropt from her hand, and a shower of tears ran down into her bosom. In this situation she had continued a minute, when the door opened, and in came Lord Fellamar. Sophia started from her chair at his entrance; and his lordship advancing forwards, and making a low bow, said, "I am afraid, Miss Western, I break in upon you abruptly," "Indeed, my lord," says she, "I must own myself a little surprized at this unexpected visit." "If this visit be unexpected, madam," answered Lord Fellamar, "my eyes must have been very faithless interpreters of my heart, when last I had the honour of seeing you; for surely you could not otherwise have hoped to detain my heart in your possession, without receiving a visit from its owner." Sophia, confused as she was, answered this bombast (and very properly I think) with a look of inconceivable disdain. My

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lord then made another and a longer speech of the same sort. Upon which Sophia, trembling, said, "Am I really to conceive your lordship to be out of your senses? Sure, my lord, there is no other excuse for such behaviour." "I am, indeed, madam, in the situation you suppose," cries his lordship; "and sure you will pardon the effects of a frenzy which you yourself have occasioned; for love hath so totally deprived me of reason, that I am scarce accountable for any of my actions." "Upon my word, my lord," said Sophia, "I neither understand your words nor your behaviour." "Suffer me then, madam," cries he, "at your feet to explain both, by laying open my soul to you, and declaring that I doat on you to the highest degree of distraction. O most adorable, most divine creature! what language can express the sentiments of my heart?" "I do assure you, my lord," said Sophia, "I shall not stay to hear any more of this." "Do not," cries he, "think of leaving me thus cruelly; could you know half the torments which I feel, that tender bosom must pity what those eyes have caused." Then fetching a deep sigh, and laying hold of her hand, he ran on for some minutes in a strain which would be little more pleasing to the reader than it was to the lady; and at last concluded with a declaration, "That if he was master of the world, he would lay it at her feet." Sophia then, forcibly pulling away her hand from his, answered with much spirit, "I promise you, sir, your world and its master I should spurn from me with equal contempt." She then offered to go; and Lord Fellamar, again laying hold of her hand, said,

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"Pardon me, my beloved angel, freedoms which nothing but despair could have tempted me to take. ——Believe me, could I have had any hope that my title and fortune, neither of them inconsiderable, unless when compared with your worth, would have been accepted, I had, in the humblest manner, presented them to your acceptance.——But I cannot lose you.— By heaven, I will sooner part with my soul! — You are, you must, you shall be only mine." "My lord," says she, "I intreat you to desist from a vain pursuit; for, upon my honour, I will never hear you on this subject. Let go my hand, my lord; for I am resolved to go from you this moment; nor will I ever see you more." "Then, madam," cries his lordship, "I must make the best use of this moment; for I cannot live, nor will I live without you." —— "What do you mean, my lord?" said Sophia; "I will raise the family." "I have no fear, madam," answered he, "but of losing you, and that I am resolved to prevent, the only way which despair points to me." — He then caught her in his arms: upon which she screamed so loud, that she must have alarmed some one to her assistance, had not Lady Bellaston taken care to remove all ears.

But a more lucky circumstance happened for poor Sophia; another noise now broke forth, which almost drowned her cries; for now the whole house rang with, "Where is she? D—n me, I'll unkennel her this instant. Show me her chamber, I say. Where is my daughter? I know she's in the house, and I'll see her if she's above-ground. Show me where she

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is." — At which last words the door flew open, and in came Squire Western, with his parson and a set of myrmidons at his heels.

How miserable must have been the condition of poor Sophia, when the enraged voice of her father was welcome to her ears! Welcome indeed it was, and luckily did he come; for it was the only accident upon earth which could have preserved the peace of her mind from being for ever destroyed.

Sophia, notwithstanding her fright, presently knew her father's voice; and his lordship, notwithstanding his passion, knew the voice of reason, which peremptorily assured him, it was not now a time for the perpetration of his villany. Hearing, therefore, the voice approach, and hearing likewise whose it was (for as the squire more than once roared forth the word daughter, so Sophia, in the midst of her struggling, cried out upon her father), he thought proper to relinquish his prey, having only disordered her handkerchief, and with his rude lips committed violence on her lovely neck.

If the reader's imagination doth not assist me, I shall never be able to describe the situation of these two persons when Western came into the room. Sophia tottered into a chair, where she sat disordered, pale, breathless, bursting with indignation at Lord Fellamar; affrighted, and yet more rejoiced, at the arrival of her father.

His lordship sat down near her, with the bag of his wig hanging over one of his shoulders, the rest of his dress being somewhat disordered, and rather a greater proportion of linen than is usual appearing

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at his bosom. As to the rest, he was amazed, affrighted, vexed, and ashamed.

As to Squire Western, he happened at this time to be overtaken by an enemy, which very frequently pursues, and seldom fails to overtake, most of the country gentlemen in this kingdom. He was, literally speaking, drunk; which circumstance, together with his natural impetuosity, could produce no other effect than his running immediately up to his daughter, upon whom he fell foul with his tongue in the most inveterate manner; nay, he had probably committed violence with his hands, had not the parson interposed, saying, "For heaven's sake, sir, animadvert that you are in the house of a great lady. Let me beg you to mitigate your wrath; it should minister a fulness of satisfaction that you have found your daughter; for as to revenge, it belongeth not unto us. I discern great contrition in the countenance of the young lady. I stand assured, if you will forgive her, she will repent her of all past offences, and return unto her duty."

The strength of the parson's arms had at first been of more service than the strength of his rhetoric. However, his last words wrought some effect, and the squire answered, "I 'll forgee her if she wull ha un. If wot ha un, Sophy, I 'll forgee thee all. Why dost unt speak? Shat ha un! d—n me, shat ha un! Why dost unt answer? Was ever such a stubborn tuoad?"

"Let me intreat you, sir, to be a little more moderate," said the parson; "you frighten the young lady so, that you deprive her of all power of utterance."

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"Power of mine a——," answered the squire. "You take her part then, you do? A pretty parson, truly, to side with an undutiful child! Yes, yes, I will gee you a living with a pox. I'll gee un to the devil sooner."

"I humbly crave your pardon," said the parson; "I assure your worship I meant no such matter."

My Lady Bellaston now entered the room, and came up to the squire, who no sooner saw her, than, resolving to follow the instructions of his sister, he made her a very civil bow, in the rural manner, and paid her some of his best compliments. He then immediately proceeded to his complaints, and said, "There, my lady cousin; there stands the most undutiful child in the world; she hankers after a beggarly rascal, and won't marry one of the greatest matches in all England, that we have provided for her."

"Indeed, cousin Western," answered the lady, "I am persuaded you wrong my cousin. I am sure she hath a better understanding. I am convinced she will not refuse what she must be sensible is so much to her advantage."

This was a wilful mistake in Lady Bellaston, for she well knew whom Mr. Western meant; though perhaps she thought he would easily be reconciled to his lordship's proposals.

"Do you hear there," quoth the squire, "what her ladyship says? All your family are for the match. Come, Sophy, be a good girl, and be dutiful, and make your father happy."

"If my death will make you happy, sir," answered Sophia, "you will shortly be so."

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"It's a lye, Sophy; it's a d—n'd lye, and you know it," said the squire.

"Indeed, Miss Western," said Lady Bellaston, "you injure your father; he hath nothing in view but your interest in this match; and I and all your friends must acknowledge the highest honour done to your family in the proposal."

"Ay, all of us," quoth the squire; "nay, it was no proposal of mine. She knows it was her aunt proposed it to me first. — Come, Sophy, once more let me beg you to be a good girl, and gee me your consent before your cousin."

"Let me give him your hand, cousin," said the lady. "It is the fashion now-a-days to dispense with time and long courtships."

"Pugh!" said the squire, "what signifies time; won't they have time enough to court afterwards? People may court very well after they have been a-bed together."

As Lord Fellamar was very well assured that he was meant by Lady Bellaston, so, never having heard nor suspected a word of Blifil, he made no doubt of his being meant by the father. Coming up, therefore, to the squire, he said, "Though I have not the honour, sir, of being personally known to you, yet, as I find I have the happiness to have my proposals accepted, let me intercede, sir, in behalf of the young lady, that she may not be more solicited at this time."

"You intercede, sir!" said the squire; "why, who the devil are you?"

"Sir, I am Lord Fellamar," answered he, "and am

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the happy man whom I hope you have done the honour of accepting for a son-in-law."

"You are a son of a b——," replied the squire, "for all your laced coat. You my son-in-law, and be d—n'd to you!"

"I shall take more from you, sir, than from any man," answered the lord; "but I must inform you that I am not used to hear such language without resentment."

"Resent my a—," quoth the squire. "Don't think I am afraid of such a fellow as thee art! because hast got a spit there dangling at thy side. Lay by your spit, and I'll give thee enough of meddling with what doth not belong to thee. I'll teach you to father-in-law me. I'll lick thy jacket."

"It's very well, sir," said my lord, "I shall make no disturbance before the ladies. I am very well satisfied. Your humble servant, sir; Lady Bellaston, your most obedient."

His lordship was no sooner gone, than Lady Bellaston, coming up to Mr. Western, said, "Bless me, sir, what have you done? You know not whom you have affronted; he is a nobleman of the first rank and fortune, and yesterday made proposals to your daughter; and such as I am sure you must accept with the highest pleasure."

"Answer for yourself, lady cousin," said the squire, "I will have nothing to do with any of your lords. My daughter shall have an honest country gentleman; I have pitched upon one for her—and she shall ha' un.—I am sorry for the trouble she hath given your ladyship with all my heart." Lady Bel-

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laston made a civil speech upon the word trouble; to which the squire answered — "Why, that's kind — and I would do as much for your ladyship. To be sure relations should do for one another. So I wish your ladyship a good night. — Come, madam, you must go along with me by fair means, or I'll have you carried down to the coach."

Sophia said she would attend him without force; but begged to go in a chair, for she said she should not be able to ride any other way.

"Prithee," cries the squire, "wout unt persuade me canst not ride in a coach, wouldst? That's a pretty thing surely! No, no, I'll never let thee out of my sight any more till art married, that I promise thee." Sophia told him, she saw he was resolved to break her heart. "O break thy heart and be d—n'd," quoth he, "if a good husband will break it. I don't value a brass varden, not a halfpenny, of any undutiful b— upon earth." He then took violent hold of her hand; upon which the parson once more interfered, begging him to use gentle methods. At that the squire thundered out a curse, and bid the parson hold his tongue, saying, "At'nt in pulpit now? when art a got up there I never mind what dost say; but I won't be priest-ridden, nor taught how to behave myself by thee. I wish your ladyship a good-night. Come along, Sophy; be a good girl, and all shall be well. Shat ha' un, d—n me, shat ha' un!"

Mrs. Honour appeared below-stairs, and with a low curtesy to the squire offered to attend her mistress; but he pushed her away, saying, "Hold, madam, hold, you come no more near my house." "And

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will you take my maid away from me?" said Sophia. "Yes, indeed, madam, will I," cries the squire: "you need not fear being without a servant; I will get you another maid, and a better maid than this, who, I'd lay five pounds to a crown, is no more a maid than my grannum. No, no, Sophy, she shall contrive no more escapes, I promise you." He then packed up his daughter and the parson into the hackney coach, after which he mounted himself, and ordered it to drive to his lodgings. In the way thither he suffered Sophia to be quiet, and entertained himself with reading a lecture to the parson on good manners, and a proper behaviour to his betters.

It is possible he might not so easily have carried off his daughter from Lady Bellaston, had that good lady desired to have detained her, but, in reality, she was not a little pleased with the confinement into which Sophia was going; and as her project with Lord Fellamar had failed of success, she was well contented that other violent methods were now going to be used in favour of another man.

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CHAPTER SIX

BY WHAT MEANS THE SQUIRE CAME TO DISCOVER HIS DAUGHTER.

THOUGH the reader, in many histories, is obliged to digest much more unaccountable appearances than this of Mr. Western, without any satisfaction at all; yet, as we dearly love to oblige him whenever it is in our power, we shall now proceed to shew by what method the squire discovered where his daughter was.

In the third chapter, then, of the preceding book, we gave a hint (for it is not our custom to unfold at any time more than is necessary for the occasion) that Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who was very desirous of reconciling her uncle and aunt Western, thought she had a probable opportunity, by the service of preserving Sophia from committing the same crime which had drawn on herself the anger of her family. After much deliberation, therefore, she resolved to inform her aunt Western where her cousin was, and accordingly she writ the following letter, which we shall give the reader at length, for more reasons than one.

"HONOURED MADAM, — The occasion of my writing this will perhaps make a letter of mine agreeable to

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my dear aunt, for the sake of one of her nieces, though I have little reason to hope it will be so on the account of another.

"Without more apology, as I was coming to throw my unhappy self at your feet, I met, by the strangest accident in the world, my cousin Sophy, whose history you are better acquainted with than myself, though, alas! I know infinitely too much; enough indeed to satisfy me, that unless she is immediately prevented, she is in danger of running into the same fatal mischief, which, by foolishly and ignorantly refusing your most wise and prudent advice, I have unfortunately brought on myself.

"In short, I have seen the man, nay, I was most part of yesterday in his company, and a charming young fellow I promise you he is. By what accident he came acquainted with me is too tedious to tell you now; but I have this morning changed my lodgings to avoid him, lest he should by my means discover my cousin; for he doth not yet know where she is, and it is adviseable he should not, till my uncle hath secured her. —— No time therefore is to be lost; and I need only inform you, that she is now with Lady Bellaston, whom I have seen, and who hath, I find, a design of concealing her from her family. You know, madam, she is a strange woman; but nothing could misbecome me more than to presume to give any hint to one of your great understanding and great knowledge of the world, besides barely informing you of the matter of fact.

"I hope, madam, the care which I have shewn on this occasion for the good of my family will recommend me again to the favour of a lady who hath always exerted so much zeal for the honour and true interest

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of us all; and that it may be a means of restoring me to your friendship, which hath made so great a part of my former, and is so necessary to my future happiness.

"I am,
with the utmost respect,
honoured madam,
your most dutiful obliged niece,
and most obedient humble servant,
HARRIET FITZPATRICK."

Mrs. Western was now at her brother's house, where she had resided ever since the flight of Sophia, in order to administer comfort to the poor squire in his affliction. Of this comfort, which she doled out to him in daily portions, we have formerly given a specimen.

She was now standing with her back to the fire, and, with a pinch of snuff in her hand, was dealing forth this daily allowance of comfort to the squire, while he smoaked his afternoon pipe, when she received the above letter; which she had no sooner read than she delivered it to him, saying, "There, sir, there is an account of your lost sheep. Fortune hath again restored her to you, and if you will be governed by my advice, it is possible you may yet preserve her."

The squire had no sooner read the letter than he leaped from his chair, threw his pipe into the fire, and gave a loud huzza for joy. He then summoned his servants, called for his boots, and ordered the Chevalier and several other horses to be saddled, and that parson Supple should be immediately sent for.

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Having done this, he turned to his sister, caught her in his arms, and gave her a close embrace, saying, "Zounds! you don't seem pleased; one would imagine you was sorry I have found the girl."

"Brother," answered she, "the deepest politicians, who see to the bottom, discover often a very different aspect of affairs, from what swims on the surface. It is true, indeed, things do look rather less desperate than they did formerly in Holland, when Lewis the Fourteenth was at the gates of Amsterdam; but there is a delicacy required in this matter, which you will pardon me, brother, if I suspect you want. There is a decorum to be used with a woman of figure, such as Lady Bellaston, brother, which requires a knowledge of the world, superior, I am afraid, to yours."

"Sister," cries the squire, "I know you have no opinion of my parts; but I 'll shew you on this occasion who is a fool. Knowledge, quotha! I have not been in the country so long without having some knowledge of warrants and the law of the land. I know I may take my own wherever I can find it. Shew me my own daughter, and if I don't know how to come at her, I 'll suffer you to call me a fool as long as I live. There be justices of peace in London, as well as in other places."

"I protest," cries she, "you make me tremble for the event of this matter, which, if you will proceed by my advice, you may bring to so good an issue. Do you really imagine, brother, that the house of a woman of figure is to be attacked by warrants and brutal justices of the peace? I will inform you how

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to proceed. As soon as you arrive in town, and have got yourself into a decent dress (for indeed, brother, you have none at present fit to appear in), you must send your compliments to Lady Bellaston, and desire leave to wait on her. When you are admitted to her presence, as you certainly wil be, and have told her your story, and have made proper use of my name (for I think you just know one another only by sight, though you are relations), I am confident she will withdraw her protection from my niece, who hath certainly imposed upon her. This is the only method. — Justices of peace, indeed! do you imagine any such event can arrive to a woman of figure in a civilised nation?"

"D—n their figures," cries the squire; "a pretty civilised nation, truly, where women are above the law. And what must I stand sending a parcel of compliments to a confounded whore, that keeps away a daughter from her own natural father? I tell you, sister, I am not so ignorant as you think me —— I know you would have women above the law, but it is all a lye; I heard his lordship say at size, that no one is above the law. But this of yours is Hanover law, I suppose."

"Mr. Western," said she, "I think you daily improve in ignorance. —— I protest you are grown an arrant bear."

"No more a bear than yourself, sister Western," said the squire. — "Pox! you may talk of your civility an you will, I am sure you never shew any to me. I am no bear, no, nor no dog neither, though I know somebody, that is something that begins with

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a b; but pox! I will show you I have got more good manners than some folks."

"Mr. Western," answered the lady, "you may say what you please, *je vous mesprise de tout mon cœur.* I shall not therefore be angry. —— Besides, as my cousin, with that odious Irish name, justly says, I have that regard for the honour and true interest of my family, and that concern for my niece, who is a part of it, that I have resolved to go to town myself upon this occasion; for indeed, indeed, brother, you are not a fit minister to be employed at a polite court. — Greenland — Greenland should always be the scene of the tramontane negociation."

"I thank Heaven," cries the squire, "I don't understand you now. You are got to your Hanoverian linguo. However, I 'll shew you I scorn to be behindhand in civility with you; and as you are not angry for what I have said, so I am not angry for what you have said. Indeed I have always thought it a folly for relations to quarrel; and if they do now and then give a hasty word, why, people should give and take; for my part, I never bear malice; and I take it very kind of you to go up to London; for I never was there but twice in my life, and then I did not stay above a fortnight at a time, and to be sure I can't be expected to know much of the streets and the folks in that time. I never denied that you know'd all these matters better than I. For me to dispute that would be all as one as for you to dispute the management of a pack of dogs, or the finding a hare sitting, with me." — "Which I promise you," says she, "I never will." — "Well, and I promise

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you," returned he, "that I never will dispute the t' other."

Here then a league was struck (to borrow a phrase from the lady) between the contending parties; and now the parson arriving, and the horses being ready, the squire departed, having promised his sister to follow her advice, and she prepared to follow him the next day.

But having communicated these matters to the parson on the road, they both agreed that the prescribed formalities might very well be dispensed with; and the squire, having changed his mind, proceeded in the manner we have already seen.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

IN WHICH VARIOUS MISFORTUNES BEFEL POOR JONES.

AFFAIRS were in the aforesaid situation when Mrs. Honour arrived at Mrs. Miller's, and called Jones out from the company, as we have before seen, with whom, when she found herself alone, she began as follows: —

"O, my dear sir! how shall I get spirits to tell you; you are undone, sir, and my poor lady's undone, and I am undone." "Hath anything happened to Sophia?" cries Jones, staring like a madman. "All that is bad," cries Honour: "Oh, I shall never get such another lady! Oh that I should ever live to see this day!" At these words Jones turned pale as ashes, trembled, and stammered; but Honour went on — "O! Mr. Jones, I have lost my lady for ever." "How? what! for Heaven's sake, tell me. O, my dear Sophia!" "You may well call her so," said Honour; "she was the dearest lady to me. I shall never have such another place." —— "D—n your place!" cries Jones; "where is — what — what is become of my Sophia?" "Ay, to be sure," cries she, "servants may be d—n'd. It signifies nothing what becomes of them, though they are turned away, and ruined ever so much. To be sure they are not flesh and blood like other people. No,

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to be sure, it signifies nothing what becomes of them." "If you have any pity, any compassion," cries Jones, "I beg you will instantly tell me what hath happened to Sophia?" "To be sure, I have more pity for you than you have for me," answered Honour; "I don't d—n you because you have lost the sweetest lady in the world. To be sure you are worthy to be pitied, and I am worthy to be pitied too: for, to be sure, if ever there was a good mistress ——" "What hath happened?" cries Jones, in almost a raving fit. "What? — What?" said Honour: "Why, the worst that could have happened both for you and for me. — Her father is come to town, and hath carried her away from us both." Here Jones fell on his knees in thanksgiving that it was no worse. "No worse!" repeated Honour; "what could be worse for either of us? He carried her off, swearing she should marry Mr. Blifil; that's for your comfort; and, for poor me, I am turned out of doors." "Indeed, Mrs. Honour," answered Jones, "you frightened me out of my wits. I imagined some most dreadful sudden accident had happened to Sophia; something, compared to which, even seeing her married to Blifil would be a trifle; but while there is life there are hopes, my dear Honour. Women in this land of liberty, cannot be married by actual brutal force." "To be sure, sir," said she, "that's true. There may be some hopes for you; but alack-a-day! what hopes are there for poor me? And to be sure, sir, you must be sensible I suffer all this upon your account. All the quarrel the squire hath to me is for taking your part, as I have done, against Mr. Blifil." "In-

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deed, Mrs. Honour," answered he, "I am sensible of my obligations to you, and will leave nothing in my power undone to make you amends." "Alas! sir," said she, "what can make a servant amends for the loss of one place but the getting another altogether as good?" "Do not despair, Mrs. Honour," said Jones, "I hope to reinstate you again in the same." "Alack-a-day, sir," said she, "how can I flatter myself with such hopes when I know it is a thing impossible? for the squire is so set against me: and yet, if you should ever have my lady, as to be sure I now hopes heartily you will; for you are a generous, good-natured gentleman; and I am sure you loves her, and to be sure she loves you as dearly as her own soul; it is a matter in vain to deny it; because as why, everybody, that is in the least acquainted with my lady, must see it; for, poor dear lady, she can't dissemble: and if two people who loves one another a'n't happy, why who should be so? Happiness don't always depend upon what people has; besides, my lady has enough for both. To be sure, therefore, as one may say, it would be all the pity in the world to keep two such loviers asunder; nay, I am convinced, for my part, you will meet together at last; for, if it is to be, there is no preventing it. If a marriage is made in heaven, all the justices of peace upon earth can't break it off. To be sure I wishes that parson Supple had but a little more spirit, to tell the squire of his wickedness in endeavouring to force his daughter contrary to her liking; but then his whole dependance is on the squire; and so the poor gentleman, though he is a

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world to whom he would have communicated it. In this hurry and distress, he took (as is common enough) the worst course, and, instead of exposing her to the lady, which would have been of little consequence, he chose to expose the lady to her; he therefore resolved to hide Honour, whom he had but just time to convey behind the bed, and to draw the curtains.

The hurry in which Jones had been all day engaged on account of his poor landlady and her family, the terrors occasioned by Mrs. Honour, and the confusion into which he was thrown by the sudden arrival of Lady Bellaston, had altogether driven former thoughts out of his head; so that it never once occurred to his memory to act the part of a sick man; which, indeed, neither the gaiety of his dress, nor the freshness of his countenance, would have at all supported.

He received her ladyship therefore rather agreeably to her desires than to her expectations, with all the good humour he could muster in his countenance, and without any real or affected appearance of the least disorder.

Lady Bellaston no sooner entered the room, than she squatted herself down on the bed: "So, my dear Jones," said she, "you find nothing can detain me long from you. Perhaps I ought to be angry with you, that I have neither seen nor heard from you all day; for I perceive your distemper would have suffered you to come abroad: nay, I suppose you have not sat in your chamber all day drest up like a fine lady to see company after a lying-in; but, how-

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very religious good sort of man, and talks of the badness of such doings behind the squire's back, yet he dares not say his soul is his own to his face. To be sure I never saw him make so bold as just now; I was afeard the squire would have struck him. I would not have your honour be melancholy, sir, nor despair; things may go better, as long as you are sure of my lady, and that I am certain you may be; for she never will be brought to consent to marry any other man. Indeed I am terribly afeared the squire will do her a mischief in his passion, for he is a prodigious passionate gentleman; and I am afeared too the poor lady will be brought to break her heart, for she is as tender-hearted as a chicken. It is pity, methinks, she had not a little of my courage. If I was in love with a young man, and my father offered to lock me up, I 'd tear his eyes out but I 'd come at him; but then there 's a great fortune in the case, which it is in her father's power either to give her or not; that, to be sure, may make some difference."

Whether Jones gave strict attention to all the foregoing harangue, or whether it was for want of any vacancy in the discourse, I cannot determine; but he never once attempted to answer, nor did she once stop till Partridge came running into the room, and informed him that the great lady was upon the stairs.

Nothing could equal the dilemma to which Jones was now reduced. Honour knew nothing of any acquaintance that subsisted between him and Lady Bellaston, and she was almost the last person in the

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ever, don't think I intend to scold you; for I never will give you an excuse for the cold behaviour of a husband, by putting on the ill-humour of a wife."

"Nay, Lady Bellaston," said Jones, "I am sure your ladyship will not upbraid me with neglect of duty, when I only waited for orders. Who, my dear creature, hath reason to complain? Who missed an appointment last night, and left an unhappy man to expect, and wish, and sigh, and languish?"

"Do not mention it, my dear Mr. Jones," cried she. "If you knew the occasion, you would pity me. In short, it is impossible to conceive what women of condition are obliged to suffer from the impertinence of fools, in order to keep up the farce of the world. I am glad, however, all your languishing and wishing have done you no harm; for you never looked better in your life. Upon my faith! Jones, you might at this instant sit for the picture of Adonis."

There are certain words of provocation which men of honour hold can properly be answered only by a blow. Among lovers possibly there may be some expressions which can be answered only by a kiss. Now the compliment which Lady Bellaston now made Jones seems to be of this kind, especially as it was attended with a look, in which the lady conveyed more soft ideas than it was possible to express with her tongue.

Jones was certainly at this instant in one of the most disagreeable and distressed situations imaginable; for, to carry on the comparison we made use of before, though the provocation was given by the

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lady, Jones could not receive satisfaction, nor so much as offer to ask it, in the presence of a third person; seconds in this kind of duels not being according to the law of arms. As this objection did not occur to Lady Bellaston, who was ignorant of any other woman being there but herself, she waited some time in great astonishment for an answer from Jones, who, conscious of the ridiculous figure he made, stood at a distance, and, not daring to give the proper answer, gave none at all. Nothing can be imagined more comic, nor yet more tragical, than this scene would have been if it had lasted much longer. The lady had already changed colour two or three times; had got up from the bed and sat down again, while Jones was wishing the ground to sink under him, or the house to fall on his head, when an odd accident freed him from an embarrassment out of which neither the eloquence of a Cicero, nor the politics of a Machiavel, could have delivered him, without utter disgrace.

This was no other than the arrival of young Nightingale, dead drunk; or rather in that state of drunkenness which deprives men of the use of their reason without depriving them of the use of their limbs.

Mrs. Miller and her daughters were in bed, and Partridge was smoaking his pipe by the kitchen fire; so that he arrived at Mr. Jones's chamber-door without any interruption. This he burst open, and was entering without any ceremony, when Jones started from his seat and ran to oppose him, which he did so effectually, that Nightingale never came far

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enough within the door to see who was sitting on the bed.

Nightingale had in reality mistaken Jones's apartment for that in which himself had lodged; he therefore strongly insisted on coming in, often swearing that he would not be kept from his own bed. Jones, however, prevailed over him, and delivered him into the hands of Partridge, whom the noise on the stairs soon summoned to his master's assistance.

And now Jones was unwillingly obliged to return to his own apartment, where at the very instant of his entrance he heard Lady Bellaston venting an exclamation, though not a very loud one; and at the same time saw her flinging herself into a chair in a vast agitation, which in a lady of a tender constitution would have been an hysteric fit.

In reality the lady, frightened with the struggle between the two men, of which she did not know what would be the issue, as she heard Nightingale swear many oaths he would come to his own bed, attempted to retire to her known place of hiding, which to her great sonfusion she found already occupied by another.

"Is this usage to be borne, Mr. Jones?" cries the lady. — "Basest of men? —— What wretch is this to whom you have exposed me?" "Wretch!" cries Honour, bursting in a violent rage from her place of concealment —— "Marry come up! —— Wretch forsooth? —— as poor a wretch as I am, I am honest; this is more than some folks who are richer can say."

Jones, instead of applying himself directly to take

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off the edge of Mrs. Honour's resentment, as a more experienced gallant would have done, fell to cursing his stars, and lamenting himself as the most unfortunate man in the world; and presently after, addressing himself to Lady Bellaston, he fell to some very absurd protestations of innocence. By this time the lady, having recovered the use of her reason, which she had as ready as any woman in the world, especially on such occasions, calmly replied; "Sir, you need make no apologies, I see now who the person is; I did not at first know Mrs. Honour: but now I do, I can suspect nothing wrong between her and you; and I am sure she is a woman of too good sense to put any wrong constructions upon my visit to you; I have been always her friend, and it may be in my power to be much more hereafter."

Mrs. Honour was altogether as placable as she was passionate. Hearing, therefore, Lady Bellaston assume the soft tone, she likewise softened hers. —— "I 'm sure, madam," says she, "I have been always ready to acknowledge your ladyship's friendships to me; sure I never had so good a friend as your ladyship —— and to be sure, now I see it is your ladyship that I spoke to, I could almost bite my tongue off for very mad. — I constructions upon your ladyship — to be sure it doth not become a servant as I am to think about such a great lady — I mean I was a servant: for indeed I am nobody's servant now, the more miserable wretch is me. — I have lost the best mistress ——" Here Honour thought fit to produce a shower of tears. — "Don't cry, child," says the good lady; "ways perhaps may be found

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to make you amends. Come to me to-morrow morning." She then took up her fan which lay on the ground, and without even looking at Jones walked very majestically out of the room; there being a kind of dignity in the impudence of women of quality, which their inferiors vainly aspire to attain to in circumstances of this nature.

Jones followed her downstairs, often offering her his hand, which she absolutely refused him, and got into her chair without taking any notice of him as he stood bowing before her.

At his return upstairs, a long dialogue past between him and Mrs. Honour, while she was adjusting herself after the discomposure she had undergone. The subject of this was his infidelity to her young lady; on which she enlarged with great bitterness; but Jones at last found means to reconcile her, and not only so, but to obtain a promise of most inviolable secrecy, and that she would the next morning endeavour to find out Sophia, and bring him a further account of the proceedings of the squire.

Thus ended this unfortunate adventure to the satisfaction only of Mrs. Honour; for a secret (as some of my readers will perhaps acknowledge from experience) is often a very valuable possession: and that not only to those who faithfully keep it, but sometimes to such as whisper it about till it come to the ears of every one except the ignorant person who pays for the supposed concealing of what is publickly known.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

SHORT AND SWEET.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the obligations she had received from Jones, Mrs. Miller could not forbear in the morning some gentle remonstrances for the hurricane which had happened the preceding night in his chamber. These were, however, so gentle and so friendly, professing, and indeed truly, to aim at nothing more than the real good of Mr. Jones himself, that he, far from being offended, thankfully received the admonition of the good woman, expressed much concern for what had past, excused it as well as he could, and promised never more to bring the same disturbances into the house.

But though Mrs. Miller did not refrain from a short expostulation in private at their first meeting, yet the occasion of his being summoned downstairs that morning was of a much more agreeable kind, being indeed to perform the office of a father to Miss Nancy, and to give her in wedlock to Mr. Nightingale, who was now ready drest, and full as sober as many of my readers will think a man ought to be who receives a wife in so imprudent a manner.

And here perhaps it may be proper to account for the escape which this young gentleman had made

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from his uncle, and for his appearance in the condition in which we have seen him the night before.

Now when the uncle had arrived at his lodgings with his nephew, partly to indulge his own inclinations (for he dearly loved his bottle), and partly to disqualify his nephew from the immediate execution of his purpose, he ordered wine to be set on the table; with which he so briskly plyed the young gentleman, that this latter, who, though not much used to drinking, did not detest it so as to be guilty of disobedience or want of complacence by refusing, was soon completely finished.

Just as the uncle had obtained this victory, and was preparing a bed for his nephew, a messenger arrived with a piece of news, which so entirely disconcerted and shocked him, that he in a moment lost all consideration for his nephew, and his whole mind became entirely taken up with his own concerns.

This sudden and afflicting news was no less than that his daughter had taken the opportunity of almost the first moment of his absence, and had gone off with a neighbouring young clergyman; against whom, though her father could have had but one objection, namely, that he was worth nothing, yet she had never thought proper to communicate her amour even to that father; and so artfully had she managed, that it had never been once suspected by any, till now that it was consummated.

Old Mr. Nightingale no sooner received this account, than in the utmost confusion he ordered a post-chaise to be instantly got ready, and, having recommended his nephew to the care of a servant, he

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directly left the house, scarce knowing what he did, nor whither he went.

The uncle thus departed, when the servant came to attend the nephew to bed, had waked him for that purpose, and had at last made him sensible that his uncle was gone, he, instead of accepting the kind offices tendered him, insisted on a chair being called; with this the servant, who had received no strict orders to the contrary, readily complied; and, thus being conducted back to the house of Mrs. Miller, he had staggered up to Mr. Jones's chamber, as hath been before recounted.

This bar of the uncle being now removed (though young Nightingale knew not as yet in what manner), and all parties being quickly ready, the mother, Mr. Jones, Mr. Nightingale, and his love, stept into a hackney-coach, which conveyed them to Doctors' Commons; where Miss Nancy was, in vulgar language, soon made an honest woman, and the poor mother became, in the purest sense of the word, one of the happiest of all human beings.

And now Mr. Jones, having seen his good offices to that poor woman and her family brought to a happy conclusion, began to apply himself to his own concerns; but here, lest many of my readers should censure his folly for thus troubling himself with the affairs of others, and lest some few should think he acted more disinterestedly than indeed he did, we think proper to assure our reader, that he was so far from being unconcerned in this matter, that he had indeed a very considerable interest in bringing it to that final consummation.

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To explain this seeming paradox at once, he was one who could truly say with him in Terence, *Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.* He was never an indifferent spectator of the misery or happiness of any one; and he felt either the one or the other in great proportion as he himself contributed to either. He could not, therefore, be the instrument of raising a whole family from the lowest state of wretchedness to the highest pitch of joy without conveying great felicity to himself; more perhaps than worldly men often purchase to themselves by undergoing the most severe labour, and often by wading through the deepest iniquity.

Those readers who are of the same complexion with him will perhaps think this short chapter contains abundance of matter; while others may probably wish, short as it is, that it had been totally spared as impertinent to the main design, which I suppose they conclude is to bring Mr. Jones to the gallows, or, if possible, to a more deplorable catastrophe.

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CHAPTER NINE

CONTAINING LOVE-LETTERS OF SEVERAL SORTS.

MR. JONES, at his return home, found the following letters lying on his table, which he luckily opened in the order they were sent.

LETTER I.

"Surely I am under some strange infatuation; I cannot keep my resolutions a moment, however strongly made or justly founded. Last night I resolved never to see you more; this morning I am willing to hear if you can, as you say, clear up this affair. And yet I know that to be impossible. I have said everything to myself which you can invent. —— Perhaps not. Perhaps your invention is stronger. Come to me, therefore, the moment you receive this. If you can forge an excuse I almost promise you to believe it. Betrayed too —— I will think no more. —— Come to me directly. —— This is the third letter I have writ, the two former are burnt —— I am almost inclined to burn this too —— I wish I may preserve my senses. —— Come to me presently."

LETTER II.

"If you ever expect to be forgiven, or even suffered within my doors, come to me this instant."

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LETTER III.

"I now find you was not at home when my notes came to your lodgings. The moment you receive this let me see you; —— I shall not stir out; nor shall anybody be let in but yourself. Sure nothing can detain you long."

Jones had just read over these three billets when Mr. Nightingale came into the room. "Well, Tom," said he, "any news from Lady Bellaston, after last night's adventure?" (for it was now no secret to any one in that house who the lady was). "The Lady Bellaston?" answered Jones very gravely. —— "Nay, dear Tom," cries Nightingale, "don't be so reserved to your friends. Though I was too drunk to see her last night, I saw her at the masquerade. Do you think I am ignorant who the queen of the fairies is?" "And did you really then know the lady at the masquerade?" said Jones. "Yes, upon my soul, did I," said Nightingale, "and have given you twenty hints of it since, though you seemed always so tender on that point, that I would not speak plainly. I fancy, my friend, by your extreme nicety in this matter, you are not so well acquainted with the character of the lady as with her person. Don't be angry, Tom, but upon my honour, you are not the first young fellow she hath debauched. Her reputation is in no danger, believe me."

Though Jones had no reason to imagine the lady to have been of the vestal kind when his amour began; yet, as he was thoroughly ignorant of the town, and had very little acquaintance in it, he had no knowledge

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of that character which is vulgarly called a demirep; that is to say, a woman who intrigues with every man she likes, under the name and appearance of virtue; and who, though some over-nice ladies will not be seen with her, is visited (as they term it) by the whole town, in short, whom everybody knows to be what nobody calls her.

When he found, therefore, that Nightingale was perfectly acquainted with his intrigue, and began to suspect that so scrupulous a delicacy as he had hitherto observed was not quite necessary on the occasion, he gave a latitude to his friend's tongue, and desired him to speak plainly what he knew, or had ever heard of the lady.

Nightingale, who, in many other instances, was rather too effeminate in his disposition, had a pretty strong inclination to tittle-tattle. He had no sooner, therefore, received a full liberty of speaking from Jones, than he entered upon a long narrative concerning the lady; which, as it contained many particulars highly to her dishonour, we have too great a tenderness for all women of condition to repeat. We would cautiously avoid giving an opportunity to the future commentators on our works, of making any malicious application and of forcing us to be, against our will, the author of scandal, which never entered into our head.

Jones, having very attentively heard all that Nightingale had to say, fetched a deep sigh; which the other, observing, cried, "Heyday! why, thou art not in love, I hope! Had I imagined my stories would have affected you, I promise you should never have

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heard them." "O my dear friend!" cries Jones, "I am so entangled with this woman, that I know not how to extricate myself. In love, indeed! no, my friend, but I am under obligations to her, and very great ones. Since you know so much, I will be very explicit with you. It is owing, perhaps, solely to her, that I have not, before this, wanted a bit of bread. How can I possibly desert such a woman? and yet I must desert her, or be guilty of the blackest treachery to one who deserves infinitely better of me than she can; a woman, my Nightingale, for whom I have a passion which few can have an idea of. I am half distracted with doubts how to act." "And is this other, pray, an honourable mistress?" cries Nightingale. "Honourable!" answered Jones; "no breath ever yet durst sully her reputation. The sweetest air is not purer, the limpid stream not clearer, than her honour. She is all over, both in mind and body, consummate perfection. She is the most beautiful creature in the universe: and yet she is mistress of such noble elevated qualities, that, though she is never from my thoughts, I scarce ever think of her beauty but when I see it." — "And can you, my good friend," cries Nightingale, "with such an engagement as this upon your hands, hesitate a moment about quitting such a —" "Hold," said Jones, "no more abuse of her: I detest the thought of ingratitude." "Pooh!" answered the other, "you are not the first upon whom she hath conferred obligations of this kind. She is remarkably liberal where she likes; though, let me tell you, her favours are so prudently bestowed, that they should rather raise a

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man's vanity than his gratitude." In short, Nightingale proceeded so far on this head, and told his friend so many stories of the lady, which he swore to the truth of, that he entirely removed all esteem for her from the breast of Jones; and his gratitude was lessened in proportion. Indeed, he began to look on all the favours he had received rather as wages than benefits, which depreciated not only her, but himself too in his own conceit, and put him quite out of humour with both. From this disgust, his mind, by a natural transition, turned towards Sophia; her virtue, her purity, her love to him, her sufferings on his account, filled all his thoughts, and made his commerce with Lady Bellaston appear still more odious. The result of all was, that, though his turning himself out of her service, in which light he now saw his affair with her, would be the loss of his bread; yet he determined to quit her, if he could but find a handsome pretence: which being communicated to his friend, Nightingale considered a little, and then said, "I have it, my boy! I have found out a sure method; propose marriage to her, and I would venture hanging upon the success." "Marriage?" cries Jones. "Ay, propose marriage," answered Nightingale, "and she will declare off in a moment. I knew a young fellow whom she kept formerly, who made the offer to her in earnest, and was presently turned off for his pains."

Jones declared he could not venture the experiment. "Perhaps," said he, "she may be less shocked at this proposal from one man than from another. And if she should take me at my word, where am

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I then? caught in my own trap, and undone for ever." "No," answered Nightingale, "not if I can give you an expedient by which you may at any time get out of the trap." —— "What expedient can that be?" replied Jones. "This," answered Nightingale. "The young fellow I mentioned, who is one of the most intimate acquaintances I have in the world, is so angry with her for some ill offices she hath since done him, that I am sure he would, without any difficulty, give you a sight of her letters; upon which you may decently break with her; and declare off before the knot is tyed, if she should really be willing to tie it, which I am convinced she will not."

After some hesitation, Jones, upon the strength of this assurance, consented; but, as he swore he wanted the confidence to propose the matter to her face, he wrote the following letter, which Nightingale dictated: —

"MADAM, — I am extremely concerned, that, by an unfortunate engagement abroad, I should have missed receiving the honour of your ladyship's commands the moment they came; and the delay which I must now suffer of vindicating myself to your ladyship greatly adds to this misfortune. O, Lady Bellaston! what a terror have I been in for fear your reputation should be exposed by these perverse accidents! There is one only way to secure it. I need not name what that is. Only permit me to say, that as your honour is as dear to me as my own, so my sole ambition is to have the glory of laying my liberty at your feet; and believe me when I assure you, I can never be made completely happy without you generously bestow

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on me a legal right of calling you mine for ever. — I am,

madam,
with most profound respect,
your ladyship's most obliged,
obedient, humble servant,
THOMAS JONES."

To this she presently returned the following answer:

"SIR, — When I read over your serious epistle, I could, from its coldness and formality, have sworn that you already had the legal right you mention; nay, that we had for many years composed that monstrous animal a husband and wife. Do you really then imagine me a fool? or do you fancy yourself capable of so entirely persuading me out of my senses, that I should deliver my whole fortune into your power, in order to enable you to support your pleasures at my expense? Are these the proofs of love which I expected? Is this the return for ——? but I scorn to upbraid you, and am in great admiration of your profound respect.

"*P.S.* I am prevented from revising: —— Perhaps I have said more than I meant. —— Come to me at eight this evening."

Jones, by the advice of his privy-council, replied:

"MADAM, — It is impossible to express how much I am shocked at the suspicion you entertain of me. Can Lady Bellaston have conferred favours on a man whom she could believe capable of so base a design? or can

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she treat the most solemn tie of love with contempt? Can you imagine, madam, that if the violence of my passion, in an unguarded moment, overcame the tenderness which I have for your honour, I would think of indulging myself in the continuance of an intercourse which could not possibly escape long the notice of the world; and which, when discovered, must prove so fatal to your reputation? If such be your opinion of me, I must pray for a sudden opportunity of returning those pecuniary obligations, which I have been so unfortunate to receive at your hands; and for those of a more tender kind, I shall ever remain, &c." And so concluded in the very words with which he had concluded the former letter.

The lady answered as follows:

"I see you are a villain! and I despise you from my soul. If you come here I shall not be at home."

Though Jonas was well satisfied with his deliverance from a thraldom which those who have ever experienced it will, I apprehend, allow to be none of the lightest, he was not, however, perfectly easy in his mind. There was in this scheme too much of fallacy to satisfy one who utterly detested every species of falshood or dishonesty: nor would he, indeed, have submitted to put it in practice, had he not been involved in a distressful situation, where he was obliged to be guilty of some dishonour, either to the one lady or the other; and surely the reader will allow, that every good principle, as well as love, pleaded strongly in favour of Sophia.

Nightingale highly exulted in the success of his

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stratagem, upon which he received many thanks and much applause from his friend. He answered, "Dear Tom, we have conferred very different obligations on each other. To me you owe the regaining your liberty; to you I owe the loss of mine. But if you are as happy in the one instance as I am in the other, I promise you we are the two happiest fellows in England."

The two gentlemen were now summoned down to dinner, where Mrs. Miller, who performed herself the office of cook, had exerted her best talents to celebrate the wedding of her daughter. This joyful circumstance she ascribed principally to the friendly behaviour of Jones, her whole soul was fired with gratitude towards him, and all her looks, words, and actions, were so busied in expressing it, that her daughter, and even her new son-in-law, were very little objects of her consideration.

Dinner was just ended when Mrs. Miller received a letter; but as we have had letters enow in this chapter, we shall communicate its contents in our next.

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alehouse and take a pot, and by good luck the beer was some of the best I have met with since I have been in town. Now, sir, I am coming to the point; for no sooner did I name you, and told him that you and I came to town together, and had lived together ever since, than he called for another pot, and swore he would drink to your health; and indeed he drank your health so heartily that I was overjoyed to see there was so much gratitude left in the world; and after we had emptied that pot I said I would be my pot too, and so we drank another to your health; and then I made haste home to tell you the news."

"What news?" cries Jones, "you have not mentioned a word of my Sophia!" "Bless me! I had like to have forgot that. Indeed, we mentioned a great deal about young Madam Western, and George told me all; that Mr. Blifil is coming to town in order to be married to her. He had best make haste then, says I, or somebody will have her before he comes; and, indeed, says I, Mr. Seagrim, it is a thousand pities somebody should not have her; for he certainly loves her above all the women in the world. I would have both you and she know, that it is not for her fortune he follows her; for I can assure you, as to matter of that, there is another lady, one of much greater quality and fortune than she can pretend to, who is so fond of somebody that she comes after him day and night."

Here Jones fell into a passion with Partridge, for having, as he said, betrayed him; but the poor fellow answered, he had mentioned no name: "Be-

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